Twelve
Steps Toward Heaven

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TWELVE STEPS TOWARD HEAVEN

BY

WALTER BION ADKINS.

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There will be no house-room for crosses in the realms of perfect holiness. We shall never know a pang; never witness a false step; never hear a sigh of shame or mortification; never see one dark hour, and never have a cloud float through its bright, unbroken azure of glory. —*T. Cuyler.*

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TO

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

J. E. STARBUCK,

WHOSE NOBLE CHARACTER

AND

CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE

HAVE BEEN TO THE AUTHOR

WHAT THE LIGHTHOUSE

IS TO THE

MARINER AT SEA.

PREFACE.

In sending this, my first venture, out upon the world, I shall say but few words of preface.

I send this little volume out on its perilous voyage with many fears and misgivings of heart; knowing full well that the success of an unknown writer is as uncertain as the wind. The purpose of the book is to lead the mind of the reader to a proper conception of life's mission.

I have prepared the work, feeling hopeful that it would accomplish much good. If, therefore, it is the means of leading some wayward soul *Twelve Steps Toward Heaven*, I will indeed be thankful, and feel that I am amply rewarded for all my toil.

"There is always room for a true book on any subject, as there is room for more light the brightest day, and more rays will not interfere with the first."

Sincerely thine,

THE AUTHOR.

NEW ROSS, IND., October, 1886.

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THE WONDERFUL STRUCTURE.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base,
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

—*Longfellow.*

THE WONDERFUL STRUCTURE.

CHAPTER I.

In life no greater calling presents itself than of building character. There is a great difference of opinion among persons as regards how old a child must be before its character begins forming.

I have given the subject a great deal of thought, and my observation is that, from the hour of birth until the hour of death, character is constantly forming. During the period of childhood the parents are directly responsible for its training.

In building a structure, the first attention is paid to the foundations; if these be defective, the structure may be fair, but it cannot be durable.

"The Pyramids of Ghizeh have outlasted the tempest of centuries; the temples and palaces of Babylon and Nineveh have perished. The Pyramids of Ghizeh are planted on a rock. The magnificent architecture of Babylon and Nineveh, the wonder of the world, has disappeared, because, as Rawlinson observes, it reposed upon the yielding soil; and this, dissolved in the rains, or pressed down by immense burdens, gave way, till the pavements yawned, and the walls leaned and tottered and fell."

So, in building character; nearly all depends on the foundation; parents therefore should be sure

that their children are standing on a firm and solid base.

I once heard a little boy swearing lustily. As I listened to the fearful oaths as they fell from his childish lips, my very blood ran cold in my veins. Terrible as it was to hear the child swear, it was nothing, compared to the unconcerned manner of the mother and father who were standing by.

Finally, when I could stand it no longer, I said to the mother: "Tell me why you allow your child to use such language?"

"Because," said she, "he is too small to know any better; when he grows older I will teach him that it is wrong." "But my dear woman," I answered, "you are making a great mistake; the captain of an ocean steamer, in the face of an oncoming storm, might as well say to the sailors: 'Do not reef the sails yet awhile; when the storm is upon us it will be time enough.'

"You are like the man who went over the Niagara Falls; he was in his skiff, floating quietly down the stream, coming nearer and nearer to the rapids; persons called to him from the shore and told him it was time to turn toward the land. He shouted back 'Not yet! farther on I will steer my boat into the harbor.' But he waited too long, and soon he entered the rapids and was carried over the falls into eternity. To-day — this very hour — is the time to mold the boy aright, and check him in his flight to ruin."

Parents, as you value peace, and if you want your child to grow up to manhood or womanhood,

a comfort and a joy in your declining years, be careful in your training while the child is small.

Young men and women who have reached the years of accountability, it is for you to say what kind of a character you will build; will you build for Heaven and life eternal, or for Hell and everlasting death? The time of a young man's leaving home is the most critical period in his life. A young man leaving home!

There is deep solemnity in the idea. Home is one of the most delightful of words, and it is no wonder that it should become the subject of poetry and song.

"There is sweet music in the sound, and in every heart that is not yet scarred with sin, there is a chord that vibrates to the note. Viewed in any aspect, it is no trifling or inconsiderable transaction, to quit the scenes, the kind friends and guardians of our childhood; to leave that spot and its dear inhabitants, with which are associated all our earliest reminiscences; to go from beneath the immediate inspection of a mother's anxious love, and the protection of a father's watchful care, and expose ourselves to the perils, privations and sorrows that await the traveler on his journey through this busy world."

The first year or two after leaving home is the most eventful period of all a young man's life; and what he is at the end of the second or third year after quitting his father's roof, that in all probability he will be as a tradesman for this world, and as an immortal being in the next.

The very moment he crosses the threshold of the

old home, the moment his dear old mother folds him to her bosom, and in a trembling tone, says "Farewell, my boy," that moment he goes forth into temptations and trials of which he never dreamed before.

Reason suggests that you cannot leave so many restraints, so much inspection and guardianship, and come into such new scenes at an age when the heart is so tender and the character so pliable, without receiving a bias. New temptations will assail you, which, if not at once successfully resisted, will acquire a permanent ascendancy. The first thing a young man does after leaving home is to look about for associates, and in making this choice of companions, it is like laying the corner-stone of the character he is going to build. In the Rocky Mountains, at what is called "The Western Divide," a rugged peak towers to the clouds, and forms itself into a great overhanging rock.

Underneath this huge stone crystal drops of water form. It is a very critical time in the little drop's history. If the wind blows strongest from the Pacific Ocean, the drop of water will fall on the east side of the mountain, and eventually find its home in the stormy Atlantic. Again, if the wind blows strongest from the Atlantic Ocean, the tiny drop will fall on the west side of the mountain, and finally find its home in the calm and peaceful Pacific.

Just so with you, young men; in making choice of companions, you are suspended between two mighty forces, — one good and one evil. If you choose evil associates, you will soon drift into a

tempestuous ocean and be dashed to pieces on the breakers. On the other hand, if you choose virtuous associates you will be carried to success, prosperity and finally to a calm and peaceful old age.

Remember that it is next to impossible, young man, for you to remain virtuous in vicious society. You cannot long retain your good morals in the society of those who are plunged in vice; it is like walking into the fire where you are sure to be burned.

When you enter vicious society, carrying good morals with you, those about you begin plotting against your peace, and seek at once for some plan whereby they may plunge you as deep in degradation as themselves. They are envious; and envy, like the worm, never runs but to the fairest fruit; like a cunning bloodhound, it singles out the fattest deer in the flock.

Prefer the aged, the virtuous, and the intelligent, and choose those that excel for your company, but despise not others.

The youthful profligate of elegant manners, lively disposition, splendid temper and intelligent mind is old Satan's most polished and powerful weapon for ruining precious souls. When you give yourself over to such a companion you are in the toils of a serpent from which nothing but Almighty God can pluck you.

Make it a point to seek the very best society wherever you go. I care not how poor you are; I care not how lowly and humble your calling is in life, if you are as you should be, — in point of

character — you can find a place in the best homes of our land.

Be noble and true, generous and brave, courteous and kind to all whom you meet, yes "write your name in kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of the thousands you come in contact with year by year; you will never be forgotten. No, your name, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind as the stars on the brow of evening."

"Over the outer coat of plum and apricot there grows a bloom more beautiful than the fruit itself — a soft, delicate powder that overspreads its colors. Now, if you strike your hand over that, and it is once gone, it is gone forever; it appears only once. The flower that hangs in the morning impearled with dew, arrayed in jewels, once shake it so that the beads fall off, and you may sprinkle water on it as you please, yet it can never be made again what it was when the dew fell gently on it from Heaven.

On a frosty morning you may see panes of glass covered with landscapes, mountains, lakes, rivers and trees, blended into a beautiful, fantastic picture. Now lay your hand upon the glass and by the scratch of your finger or by the warmth of your hand all the delicate tracery will be obliterated."

So there is in youth a beauty and purity of character, which, when once touched and defiled, can never be restored — a fringe more delicate than frost-work, which, when torn and broken, will never be repaired. When a young lad or girl leaves the parents' house with the blessing of a mother's tears

still wet upon the cheek, if early purity of character be once lost, it is a loss that can never be made again. * * * In building character many persons make a fatal mistake by casting off the larger sins and allowing the minor imperfections to remain. Ah, we should watch and resist the encroachment of little faults for in time they may grow very powerful and overthrow fair structures which we thought were secure.

"A friend called on Michael Angelo, who was finishing a statue. Some time afterward he called again; the sculptor was still at his work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed: 'Have you been idle since I saw you last?' 'By no means,' replied the sculptor, 'I have retouched this part and polished that; I have softened this feature and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip and more energy to this limb.' 'Well, well,' said his friend, 'all these are trifles.' 'It may be so,' replied Angelo, 'but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle.'"

It is more common to neglect the smaller imperfections than the larger; they are so small and insignificant in our sight, that we deem it unnecessary to guard our character against them. The lesson we derive from the story of Baldur the Good is one by which we can all profit.

"Baldur the Good having been tormented with terrible dreams indicating that his life was in peril, told them to the assembled gods, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger. Then Frigga, the wife of Odin, exacted

an oath from fire and water, from iron and all other metals, from stones, trees, diseases, beasts, birds, poisons and creeping things that none of them would do any harm to Baldur.

Odin, not satisfied with all this, and feeling alarmed for the fate of his son, determined to consult the prophetess Angerbode, a giantess, mother of Fenris, Hela and the midgard serpent.

But the other gods, feeling that what Frigga had done was quite sufficient, amused themselves with using Baldur as a mask, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes, for do what they would none of them could harm him.

And this became a favorite pastime with them, and was regarded as an honor to Baldur.

But when Loki beheld this scene, he was sorely vexed that Baldur was not hurt. Assuming, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Frigga. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the gods were doing at their meetings. She replied that they were throwing darts and stones at Baldur, without being able to hurt him.

" Ay," said Frigga, " neither stones nor sticks, nor anything else, can hurt Baldur, for I have exacted an oath from all of them." " What," exclaimed the woman, " have all things sworn to spare Baldur?"

" All things," replied Frigga, " except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from."

As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and

resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled.

There he found Hodur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him, said: "Why dost thou not also throw something at Baldur?"

"Because I am blind," answered Hodur, "and see not where Baldur is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw."

"Come, then," said Loki, "do like the rest and show honor to Baldur by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands."

Hodur then took the mistletoe, and, under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Baldur, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless.

His mother, deeming this slender parasite of the forest so insignificant that it could not injure her darling, had not thought of securing its pledge, but though it was weak in itself, when cast with the strength of a deity, it became mighty. "And there are many who walk safe amidst the greater temptations of the world, which drop harmless at their feet, and yield before the darts of faults at whose feebleness they have smiled."

Then, let us closely examine the foundations on which we are building, and see that no small fault lingers there to undermine and cast down the fair building we wish to erect.

In the building, called character, the most important stone to be laid in the foundation, is *Truth*. Without this stone, the building will, in time, crum-

ble and fall. The omission of truth causes us to put worthless stones in the walls of our building, which — though they may be fair to look upon — are very treacherous, and will cause the structure to be condemned.

The first stone we put in — if Truth is omitted — is *Deception*. To the builder it presents a beautiful appearance, and he trusts that he will be able to deceive the world; so he places the stone in the wall.

Then follows the stone PRIDE. For a moment the architect scans it closely, but finding no serious objection to its qualities as a building stone he puts it in the wall. Then comes the stone EGOTISM.

The builder turns it over and over; looks at this side and that; he is very much undecided as to the propriety of placing it in the structure. Finally he concludes it will do, and therefore places it in the wall.

Next comes the stone LIE. The architect eyes this stone with more suspicion than any he has heretofore used. It is darker than the others; its surface is rough and uneven. Finally he lays it aside and tries to find another stone for the place; but his efforts are in vain; he cannot find one that will fit in. Then he takes up the stone Lie again, and is surprised to find that it is the very one for the place.

And now comes the stone INTEMPERANCE. There are many things about this stone that the builder does not like; but as its exterior presents a very fair appearance and fits in the wall so nicely, he uses it.

Then comes the stone THEFT.

As the builder takes up this stone he trembles

from head to foot. It is far worse than any stone he has used. He is very uneasy, and would throw the stone away if such a thing were possible. At last he consoles himself by saying: "It is as good as some others I have used, so I will put it in."

Next comes the stone PRISON. With his heart throbbing wildly, and his countenance pale as death, the builder views this stone. He determines to cast the stone away. For many weeks he ponders over the situation; then comes again to the building and notes how little it lacks of being finished. Three more stones and the building will be completed. Sorrowfully, reluctantly, he lifts the stone and places it in the wall.

Then comes the stone GALLOWS. As the weary workman puts this stone in its place a shudder runs through his body, and he sinks exhausted on the wall. For a long time he remains in a trance; then suddenly remembering that the building lacks but one more stone to make it complete, he rises and looks about him in a dazed and bewildered manner.

The last stone is DEATH — the finishing stone of the wonderful structure. With a mighty effort the laborer puts it in place, and then in great agony cries out: "Lost! Lost! My building is doomed to everlasting destruction."

We have spoken figuratively, and will now apply the argument.

Truth is veracity, purity from falsehood, fidelity, constancy. "Plows, to go true, depend much on the truth of the iron work." And again, in the Gospel by John xiv. chapter and sixth verse, we find where Jesus Christ is called the Truth.

The omission of truth in our character causes us to bring into our nature deception. Now, if we only used this element for the purpose of deceiving those around us, it would not be so terrible; but while we are endeavoring to decoy or waylay those about us, we are luring ourselves into a trap from whence there is no escape. First, we deceive self into believing true that which is false, and false that which is true.

This "mistletoe," once planted in the heart, it becomes an easy matter to admit pride. Proud of ourselves, to think we can dissemble so cleverly. Then egotism — one of the most powerful adversaries with which character has to battle — rushes in. Dear reader, fight against this evil with all your might; close the door of your heart against it.

Egotism once in the heart, the person will soon begin lying; not only to those with whom he associates, but he will lie to himself. Intemperance then intrudes itself. This monstrous evil presents to the tender youth a beautiful appearance; and he determines to test his strength. Something within tells him to "touch not, taste not, handle not," but as he has admitted lying into his heart, he lies to himself, and steps into some palace of sin. A dazzling sight presents itself. The walls hung with beautiful oil paintings; the ceiling handsomely decorated; the floor carpeted with Brussels of the finest make and pattern; the plate glass mirrors reaching from ceiling to floor; the glittering, cut-glass decanters, of every known pattern, outvying in splendor the colors of the rainbow; all tend to convince the poor, misguided youth that

intemperance is not as bad as has been represented.

Days, weeks and months pass away. The erring one finds that he has deceived himself. His wealth is gone, yet he must have rum, and therefore bethinks him of some plan to raise money so he can again visit the palace. Palace! No, no, not the palace. He has long ago changed his place of drinking, and now goes to some underground den and drinks the soul-destroying stuff from the ragged edge of a discarded oyster can. As he ponders over the matter, a happy thought comes to him: the pawn-shop.

First he sends his coat, then his shoes, then his shirt, piece by piece it goes, till all, yes all, is gone, and the man is left with no shred to hide his filth.

And now the time has come in the poor soul's history when it is forced to add a crime from which it instinctively shrinks — namely, theft. But no matter what conscience may say; no difference how much his finer feeling may disapprove of such an action; he has gone too far, and he feels that it would be harder to go back than to hurry on to the end.

From theft he goes to murder, and then we next find him languishing in a prison cell, shut out from the glorious sunlight of Heaven. Lastly, we see him mounting the scaffold to die an ignominious death. Dark, gloomy clouds move slowly through the air; no bright gleam of sunshine breaks through the heavy masses to cheer the melancholy scene. Angels move silently back from the battlements of Heaven and mournfully weep. Christ himself would fain turn away from the sorrowful sight, but

His great, loving heart will not let Him, and in silence He looks upon the solemn spectacle.

The black cap is drawn over the prisoner's face, the noose adjusted and the poor, self-deceived soul which built for Hell instead of Heaven is launched into eternity.

We cannot build successfully unless we are in possession of the imperial virtue, truth. Ah! truth is the diamond for which the candid mind ever seeks. "It is the sanction of every appeal that is made for the good and the right. It may be crushed to earth, it may be long in achieving victory, but it is omnipotent, and must triumph at last."

You should also hold the truths of Christianity firmly, and you should build upon them. Let religion take possession of your soul, and you will rear a grander character than any which can be reared upon the ever-shifting waste of doubt and denial.

"Religion is a personal, experimental and practical thing. It is a thing of the *heart*, and not mere outward forms; a living principle in the soul, influencing the mind, employing the affections, guiding the will, and directing as well as enlightening the conscience. It is a *supreme*, not a subordinate matter, demanding and obtaining the throne of the soul, giving law to the whole character, and requiring the whole man and all his conduct to be in subordination.

It is a *universal*, and not a partial thing; not confining itself to certain times and places and occasions, but forming an integral part of the

character and blending with every occupation. It is *noble* and lofty, not an abject, servile and grovelling thing; it communes with God, with truth, with holiness, with Heaven, with eternity and infinity.

It is a *happy*, and not a melancholy thing, giving a peace that passeth understanding and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. And it is durable, not a transient thing, passing with us through life, lying down with us on the pillow of death, rising with us at the last day, and dwelling in our souls in Heaven as the very element of eternal life. Such is religion, the sublimest thing in our world, sent down to be our comforter and ministering angel on earth.

"Our guide to everlasting life
Through all this gloomy vale."

* * * Just here, we desire to say a few things to those persons who have built thus far in life a sublime character, and now think that nothing can hurt it in the least. Ah! my kind reader, at this juncture you must *watch*.

Watch is a short word, but one we ought not to lose sight of. It came from the lips of Christ, and all that comes from His lips we ought to look at with love, and think of with care. When men set a watch, it is to guard and take care of some good thing which they prize much. At the door of a king you will find a sentinel, whose duty it is to watch and keep the king safe from harm.

Men set a watch, too, by the bed of a sick man to see that he has what he wants and what will do him good.

The shepherd watches his flock of sheep, too, to see that no harm comes to them.

And so it is with our character; it is of great price, and we should take great pains to shield it from harm.

Our character is worth more than precious stones. It is worth more than the king's throne. This character, which we have molded so well and which is now assuming form and perfect symmetry, is what Christ would have us watch. We must keep close to God. On every hand our souls have enemies who seek to do them harm. Sheep would not need any one to watch them if there were no wolves to tear them and no pits for them to fall into. Now our souls want a watch more than the poor sheep, for there are wolves close at hand who would be but too glad to tear the sheep of Christ's flock; and there are pits dug for us to fall in, and snares laid for our feet and stones put to make us fall. The way to be safe from all these is to do what the Lord tells us. Watch !

A king once employed a renowned sculptor to carve for him a statue which was to adorn the front of his magnificent palace. The artist worked faithfully at his task, taking no note of the days, weeks and months as they were unrolled from the great calendar of the universe. As he worked he thought to himself: " I will lay aside my mallet and chisel and work no more when I finish this task." Coupled with this thought came the desire to make this work the crowning event of his life. He brought all his powers as an artist to bear on this special undertaking, and although he was old in his

profession and a master, he studied Angelo with the zeal and vigor of former days.

"Time, like a great ship, whose sails are never lowered," hurried on, and the sculptor, with folded arms stood before his completed work. As he looked at it a smile of satisfaction played among the deep wrinkles on his forehead, and his eyes sparkled with delight. So perfect was the statue that the artist imagined he could see the bosom rise and fall, and the lips part as if in the act of speaking.

At last the day arrived when the statue was to be hoisted to its final resting-place. The king and his royal knights were assembled on the public square to witness the ceremonies of the occasion, while from every side great crowds of people came flocking to the scene. When all was in readiness the king gave the command to heave away, and slowly the huge statue moved aloft. The sculptor, with wildly-throbbing heart, watched every movement with painful interest, and when the statue was in its place he drew a sigh of relief, then ascended to superintend the sitting of the work, which had already made him famous.

When he had finished his work the artist went below, where he was met by the king, who said to him: "Faithful servant, thou hast indeed wrought a perfect image, and henceforth thou shalt not work."

So saying, the king handed the artist a purse filled with gold. After thanking the king for his kind favor the sculptor stood with bowed head, and

on his face there rested a sad and gloomy expression.

Noticing this, the king said: "My good man, why art thou so cast down?" Whereupon the sculptor made answer: "O king, my eagle eye has discovered an imperfection in the statue." "Surely the blemish must be very small and insignificant," answered the king.

"Yes," said the artist, "it is very small, and is on the right cheek."

"Then take your mallet and chisel and carve away the blemish," commanded the king. The sculptor ascended to the statue and began anew his work. Click, click, went the sharp chisel on the cheek of marble. Slowly, carefully, deliberately, the artist worked away at the flaw. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the beautiful statue toppled over, and went crashing to the pavement below, where it was dashed to pieces. The sculptor turned and looked down upon the white, upturned faces of the throng below. For a moment he viewed the scene. Then uttering a cry of despair, he jumped far out, and the next instant he lay dead among the ruins upon which he had spent the best years of his life.

So it is in life. We may live for many, many years; building, building, until we rest from our labor, and wait patiently for the Master to call. Then, in that last hour, we may take one false step, strike one false blow, that will cause our fair house to fall and crumble into everlasting ruin.

Meet temptation with holy thought and illustrious desires to know and do the will of God. Be

just, because justice brings its own reward; be modest, because immodesty never pays in society; be brave, because you gain glory thereby; be true and faithful, because truth will bring you friends, the most useful of all possessions.

O, my dear reader, " pause a moment before you hazard your dearest interests on a game of chance; for you cannot buy knowledge and carry it away in an earthly vessel; in your own soul you must receive it, to be a blessing or a curse."

Deceive not yourself; keep constantly in mind the great and solemn thought that the all-seeing eye of God is ever upon you. An eye, dear reader, that is brighter than the noonday sun; an eye that can scan every nation and clime at a single glance; an eye that the Stygian darkness cannot o'erspread, or in any way shut out the vision; an eye, dear one, that penetrates even the vilest and darkest places in life. " As mere human knowledge can split a ray of light and analyze the manner of its composition, so God, with his sublime intelligence, may read in the feeble shining of this earth of ours every thought and act, every vice and virtue of every responsible creature in it."

Let me plead with you to build a character that will cause Christ and the angels to rejoice when they behold it. Then when the Master calls, when your building is complete, you will not look mournfully into the past, but will look eagerly into the mighty future. And, as your life ebbs slowly away, and finally goes out amidst the rustling of an angel's wings —" like the breathing of a summer sea asleep

upon a sandy shore"— there will be no regrets, no sorrow, no mourning, because you built for Heaven and Life Eternal.

THE SEA OF LIFE.

And thou must sail upon this sea, a long
Eventful voyage! The wise *may* suffer wreck,
The foolish *must*. Oh! then, be early wise.

—*Ware.*

THE SEA OF LIFE.

CHAPTER II.

"LIFE is a sea; and each soul that is born is a frail bark, which has to push its way to the port of rest and peace. But when we launch a ship, we know not if it will reach its port or no. And so with the soul.

It may not reach its home. It may go down at sea, it may strike a rock, or the foe may seize it and make it his prize.

It is a fine sight to see the launch of a good ship. They cut the ropes and move the blocks, and off she glides with an air of grace down the slides, and dips her bows deep, and then rights and floats like a swan on the wave.

And is it not a sweet sight to gaze at a dear babe on its mother's breast, and to watch the mild peace and sweet calm of its brow, and think that a soul lies in that little peaceful bosom, which must live when thrones are cast down, and crowns are gone? Is it not sweet to think that the dear babe knows not of all the pains and toil of a world which groans night and day with the sin of man? No throb of pain shoots through its frame, no pang of woe yet lights up its eye with the fire of pride, or brings to its cheek the red blush of shame.

But go your way, and when years have past,

come back and seek that child. It may be dead; the jaws of the cold grave may have shut it in, and its bones may be now all that is left of its form of sweet grace and its pure charms.

But if it lives, what a change! As you gaze once more on the face, how sad the sight! Care has dug deep on his brow, and the plow of vice wrought deep on his cheek.

He is a thorn in that fond breast on which he hung when a child; and the heart that yearns for him now, as warm as at first, feels that it would have been well if he had not been born, or if the day of his birth had been the day of his death.

Oh, what a curse is sin when it makes a child a plague, to sting the heart that loves it most, a curse to the warm heart of her who bare him! * * *

A ship with its rudder torn away is unmanageable, and the pilot, expert though he may be, is forced to stand by and see the noble vessel drive straight into the merciless breakers.

Just so with the soul. If it be left without a steering power, it is sure to go down at sea. * * *

An eminent artist once wanted a subject from which to paint a picture of innocence. For days and weeks he searched diligently, and at last he came one day to the home of a poor but Christian family. He found the mother, on whose face the ravages of disease had set their mark, seated in a comfortable arm-chair. On the floor at her feet knelt a blue-eyed boy just beginning to talk; his little hands were clasped on his mother's knee, and looking up into her face, with all the trustfulness

of an innocent child, he repeated after her the words of a simple prayer.

As the artist seriously meditated upon the scene before him, his eyes filled with tears, and strong emotion moved his soul. "Oh, what a picture of innocence," he cried. "At last I have found my model." * * * * * *

Days, weeks, months and years rolled away; the picture, now completed, hung in one of the greatest art galleries of the world; hundreds of people gazed upon it and went away with grand motives and noble resolves filling their souls. The artist's fortune was made; the picture had brought him wealth and fame, but as the years went by he grew dissatisfied, and said: "I will paint a picture of guilt and place it beside innocence, then I will lay my brush down and paint no more."

Then began the search for a subject from which to paint a picture portraying guilt; and this time he was even more particular than before, for he wanted it to hang by the side of innocence, to show the great contrast between the two.

One day after years of weary travel he came to a gloomy prison. Here, down underneath the ground in a dark, damp and gloomy cell, he found the object of his search. The prisoner was young, in the very prime of early manhood, but upon what was once a fair and peaceful brow dissipation and crime had set their seal; on every feature guilt shone out so plainly that the artist cried out: "'Tis the model for my picture of guilt." * * *

Time — of which the artist took no note — with tireless and rapid wings hurried on. The picture

was completed and placed beside innocence, and from almost every part of the globe people came in great numbers to see this wonderful painting. Mothers were there, and when they looked at the picture they would exclaim: " Oh, what a contrast; surely the picture of guilt is overdrawn."

Among the thousands of people who looked upon those pictures, there were but few who knew that the child of innocence and the man of guilt were one and the same, yet it was true; the little boy, kneeling at his mother's feet, his face diffused with the divine light of God, and wistful eyes of blue looking up into his mother's pale but kind face, was the guilty man that stood in the loathsome cell.

Oh, God! what a change! It seems impossible that one who was so innocent could ever grow to be such a vile, sinful creature as the man now looking through the prison bars. The frail craft had been left without a mother to guide it, and in the struggles incident to human life, had gone down in the waves of adversity.

Life is a sea, and storms must be met — the best meet with them, but the worst make storms, as though the storms of this life were play and sport to them, and they could not have too much of them. But there is one storm which they dare not face, and that is the storm of death. They may brave it out to the last, and boast that they have no fear; but if we could read their hearts, we should see a worm at work, which gives death a sting no force of man can draw out.

I said that each soul was a frail bark — yes —

and the same storms that meet a ship will meet the soul in her way to her rest.

Look at a ship as she shakes out her reefs to the wind and leaves her port. The hearts of her brave crew are free from care, a smile plays upon the cheek, the flags throw out their bright stripes in the breeze, the hat is off, and a shout rends the sky; all is life and joy.

But, by-and-by, the scene changes; fierce winds split the sails to rags; the sea boils, and its white foam curls up and shoots through the shrouds; mountainous waves, capped with silver spray, come bounding toward the vessel. Darker and darker grow the clouds, the lightning flashes through the dark sky like fiery serpents, lighting up the scene with a strange, weird beauty.

Nearer and nearer come the mighty waves, while high on their crest rides the storm-petrel, fearless messenger of the storm, sending forth his shrill and mournful cry out over the restless deep, like some lost mariner. Stronger blows the wind, causing the ship to rock to and fro like a toy cradle. And now the storm, in all its fury, strikes the vessel and sweeps clear the decks; the good ship groans in all her planks; her beams quake from stem to stern; the masts crack, and her ribs of oak strain and creak; right gallantly she rides the waves, now lifting herself majestically toward Heaven, then, like a monster of the deep, diving far beneath the waves.

Leaks are sprung, and the pumps work in vain; the crew are struck with awe, each stout heart is faint, the eye of each wanes dim, the cheek turns

pale, the knees shake; no hope lights up the eye, no smile of joy plays now round the mouth; pale death seems to ride the wave, and his hour is come.

But the helm is in the grasp of one who knows how to steer, and each eye now turns as its last hope to him. His skill saves the ship, the keen shaft of death lights not on the crew, but they ride through the storm and are brought by the good hand of that God who rules the wave, and can say to it in its wild war: "Peace, be still," and speak it to a calm, to the port where they would be. And it is just so with the soul. The winds may blow a keen blast, and the storm may howl around her path, but if the helm is in the hand of Christ she is safe.

None but Christ can guide her through the storms of life, and bring her safe to the port of peace and rest.

Almost daily in our voyage of life, we see pirate crafts bearing on their great, black bows such names as Skeptic, Infidel, Free-love, Mormon, Atheist. Every one of them are condemned vessels, and the soul that takes passage on any of them does so on its own risk.

A few years ago I took passage on a ship that had been pronounced unseaworthy by proper officers. On the evening of the second day out a severe storm came upon us. All night the old vessel struggled with the tempestuous ocean, creaking in every joint as though she would go to pieces at any moment. I realized my position fully. I had of my own free will chosen a condemned vessel with which to make my voyage. Had I gone

down with that ship I could have blamed no one but myself, for good men had told me the ship was unfit for sea.

Dear people, how many, oh, how many! are to-day going aboard the condemned vessels that are sailing on the sea of life, while good people stand by and plead with them to take passage on the good ship Zion? Ah, I fear there are many who turn aside from such pleading to step aboard condemned vessels which will finally run into heavy breakers and sink in mid-ocean. In its voyage through life the soul should take soundings so as to keep off the sand-bars of sin.

At the mouth of the Columbia river there is a treacherous sand-bar. The tide of the broad Pacific and the sweeping river together shifts the bar from one place to another, until sailors never know just where to find it.

When a ship nears this place two sailors, one on each side of the ship, take their stand with long sounding lines.

They throw the lines far out ahead of the vessel, and as the plumb passes directly beneath them they cry out in a peculiar voice the number of fathoms deep. By this means the pilot is enabled to steer his vessel safely into the river.

Remember, dear voyager, that none but Christ can pilot your vessel through the storms of this life, and bring her safe into Heaven's eternal harbor.

None who trust Him shall miss that port at last. They may have a rough path, but it shall end in peace. They may meet with storms not a few,

but they shall ride through them all and be kept in peace.

Let us each take Christ on board and pray Him to take the helm and guide us and lead us in all our ways. He knows each rock that lies hid. He sees each storm as it comes and He can keep us clear of the rocks and ward off the storms.

If life is a sea it has its shores. Our birth is a shore, our death is a shore too; but the life to come has no shore, it ends not. Some pass from their birth to their death in a few days; some in a few months; some in a few years; but all, yes, all, in a *short* time — yes, time is short.

Let us see to it that we are in the course that leads to the port of bliss, and then, when our sun goes down the sky, we shall wake up to the joys of a life that is not short, a life that shall know no end.

At the close of the late war persons who had loved ones away, were very anxious for them to return. One day in a certain town it was announced that a company of soldiers would arrive the following day. Morning dawned fair and bright, and soon the town was swarming with people from all parts of the country.

Sisters were there to meet brothers that had been gone for four long years. Mothers were there to welcome home beloved sons; wives were there to welcome home dear husbands; maids were there to welcome home long-absent lovers.

When the train pulled in and the boys in blue began stepping off, a grand sight presented itself; tears fell on the platform like rain, while from hun-

dreds of throats went up the cry of "Home, home at last."

Sailing rapidly over the sea of life I see two great vessels with outspread sails; one is crowded to its utmost capacity, but the other is not crowded; each pilot seems bent on leaving the other, and so crowds on every sail. On, on they speed, faster and faster, scattering the white foam in every direction. But see, a change is coming; the sea-birds seek refuge on the ships. It is certain that this means a hurricane.

The center of the clouds in the zenith are dismal black, while their skirts are tinged with a copper-colored hue. And now I hear a terrific noise like the sound of thunder mingled with that of torrents rushing down the steeps of lofty mountains.

The sky and the water seem blended together. Thick masses of clouds, of a frightful form, sweep across the zenith with the swiftness of birds, while others appear motionless as rocks. Not a single spot of sky is discernible in the whole firmament. But see! just a little ways ahead of the two ships, massive rocks rear their rough faces high above the boiling sea.

Two great mountains tower into the sky, leaving just room enough between them for the passage of a ship.

The pilot on the crowded vessel stands firm at his post; one false move, and all is lost; the passengers turn toward him, and wait with bated breath; the ship tosses violently, but speeds unerringly on its way.

Nearer and nearer to the narrow opening in the

mountains she comes, just grazing the fearful rocks that seem directly in her path, and now mid a great shout she passes through the narrow opening into still waters beyond. Angels look out over the battlements of Heaven and shout, " Home, home at last! "

But look at the other ship; she struggles with the breakers and a general cry of horror issues from the passengers.

On she speeds like the wind; the pilot is restless and uneasy; and now the ship turns from her course and is instantly dashed upon the rocks, at the distance of a cable's length from the harbor of peace.

Friends, which vessel are you on? The one with Christ at the helm, which will finally land at Heaven's gate; or the one that will eventually dash on the rocks and carry you down to everlasting misery and woe?

Where instead of saying " Home, home at last! " you will say " Father, mother, sister, brother, wife, Heaven and all its joys, I bid you an eternal farewell! "

Not Dead, but Sleeping.

Why pause the mourners? Who forbids one weeping?
Who the dark pomp of sorrow has delayed!
"Set down the bier — he is not dead, but sleeping!
Young man, arise!" — He spake and was obeyed!

—*Heber.*

NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPING.

CHAPTER III.

MANY years ago, there lived in a small city called "Nain," a widow and her son. Through long years of penury, suffering and toil, the fond mother watched over her darling boy — with that tender love and care which a mother knows so well how to wield — until he grew to be a strong, noble-hearted man.

Every one who met him loved him. Joy and peace attended his footsteps wherever he went. His mother looked upon him with pride, and well she might, for he was worthy her great admiration. As the widow looked upon her heart's idol, an expression of joy came into her face, and the bright, loving smiles that came and went drove, for the time being, all the wrinkles from her aged brow.

Looking into his mother's bright, sunny face, the young man thought of the unclouded future and its wonderful possibilities. He pictured to his mind how he would beautify the little home and add to its comfort.

Already he could see the climbing ivy, which he would plant, that in time would cover the front porch, making a cool shade wherein his mother could sit, protected from the scorching rays of the sun, and wait for his coming home from labor.

But, alas, alas, how little we know what a day will bring forth!

The young man was taken very sick, and the widowed mother, all lorn and forsaken, sat mourning in the silent chamber of suffering and gloom. I say forsaken, because the neighbors did not come to comfort her in this her greatest trial. These two, widow and son, had lived alone, caring for nothing save each other.

Therefore, the people stood aloof and disturbed them not. As the poor, distressed mother stood by the bedside of her child and witnessed his agony and suffering, her strength failed, and with a shriek that seemed to come from the very depths of a breaking heart, she sank helpless to the floor. The sick boy, startled from his feverish sleep, opened his eyes and softly murmured, "Mother, where are you?" Low as the words were spoken, the anxious mother's quick ear caught the sound, and staggering to her feet she said, "Here I am, dear one."

But the sufferer heard her not, for he was sleeping again. Through long, wearisome days the patient, loving mother watched o'er her boy's anguish, and through long, dreary nights she kept her lonely vigil by his side. But all in vain. Turning to his mother one evening, just as the setting sun was flooding the room with rich, mellow light, he said: "Dearest mother, hard as it may seem, I must leave you." "Oh, what will I do!" cried the almost frantic mother, "if my blessed boy is taken from me and carried away to some distant grave?"

"I know not, mother. I suppose, however, that

a way will be provided." For a moment there was silence, then the boy continued:

"Kiss me good-by, dearest mother, for I-am g-o-i-n-g. Farewell." The long vigil was over, and the object of so much care and anxiety lay still in death's cold grasp.

The mother's fair dream was over, and all the bright, glorious visions that once came to solace and comfort her have vanished. Grief! strong, bitter grief, such as only comes to mothers, now took possession of the lone widow. Oh! dark and mournful was her soul as she gazed with sadness on all that reminded her of life in the dead. In the cold, calm face are features that speak of childish freaks and awaken remembrances of bright, joyous days forever gone.

The long, dark hours of night finally wore away, and a new day broke in splendor o'er the widow's desolate home. The haughty Roman sentinel, with glittering spear stood beside the gate of Nain. The busy, hurrying tread of early comers to the city was over, a dead, white heat quivered upon the firm, sleeping dust. The cold snake crept forth from his hiding place by the wall, and basked his scaly side in the sun.

It was high noon. A solemn hush fell on the city. And the dull, low murmur of a funeral broke upon the ear. The silent throng crept slowly along the wide street. On, through the burning rays of the sun, they walked with forgetful sadness. When they arrived at the city gate it swung back on its massive hinges, and the Roman bent his spear point

downward as the bearers passed bending beneath their burden.

There was but one mourner, and she followed close behind the coffin, crumpling the pall with her withered hands. Her short steps faltered with weakness, and moan after moan came from her broken heart. There were those about her who had pity, yet they spoke no words of comfort; for the widow had always lived alone with her boy, he was her all, the only treasure, there was no one that could comfort her. Just as the procession passed from the gate a man came meeting it on his way to "Nain." The stranger was very pale and great drops of sweat stood on his fair brow. Since early sunrise he had been trudging along the dusty highway from Capernaum.

Although the day was very warm, he had not stopped at Kishon's sparkling springs to wet his parched lips, or wash his burning feet. On the alder of Bethulia's plain the grapes of Palestine hung ripe and wild, yet he turned not aside to pluck one, but kept gazing on from every swelling mount to where, amid the distant hills, nestled the humble roofs of "Nain." The pitying crowd followed by the one stricken mourner moved on toward the place of burial.

The grief-stricken mother with straining hands clasped the pall closer upon her breast and with a gasping sob quick as a child and with an inquiring wildness dashing through the thin, gray lashes of her fevered eyes, she came to where the stranger stood by the roadside. The mourner paused, and when the traveler looked upon her, his heart was

deeply moved. Turning to those who bore the bier, he said, " Set down the bier — he is not dead, but sleeping! " When they laid the corpse at his feet he gently took the pall from the mother's hands and in silence laid it back from the dead.

The throng in mute wonder drew nigh and gazed in silence on the stranger's calm brow. For a moment the pale traveler stood and prayed. Then taking the cold hand, he said, " Arise! "

Instantly the breast began heaving, a sudden flush ran through the divided lips; weak and trembling in every limb, the boy sat upright in his shroud and with a murmur spoke his mother's name. With a cry of delight, the mother clasped her treasure around the neck and wept for joy.

Then the stranger went calmly on his way to " Nain." Mothers, think what fearful darkness enveloped this poor widow's soul. The light of Divine Truth had never been shed abroad in her heart. With her, death ended all. But with you it is different. You know there is another, better and a grander life than this. You know that if we are to enjoy that better life we must die in Christ.

Are you training the children for Heaven and life eternal? If you are, how happy you will be when they gather about your death-bed and promise to meet you in that upper and better kingdom! O, Lord! when Thou dost speak on that great day which we have heard of, grant that we may rise even as the widow's son, and dwell with Thee forever and forever. Amen.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

Whoever, with an earnest soul,
Strives for some end from this low world afar;
Still upward travels, though he miss the goal,
And strays — but towards a star.

— *Bulwer.*

ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

CHAPTER IV.

A FEW years ago I stood on the top of a high mountain and watched the sun rise.

Far below me lay the valley, wrapped in darkness, enveloped in a dense fog.

A heavy dew had fallen during the night, and everything around me was damp, and the limbs of the huge pine tree near me drooped beneath the weight upon them.

Presently, far away over a distant mountain peak, I caught a glimpse of the rising sun. Higher and higher rose the glorious orb of day, until at last he seemed to sit on the lofty mountain's top, like a great fire king seated on his throne.

Only for a moment did he rest here, and then he started on his glorious course through the blue of heaven. I cast my eyes below. O, how grand! It looked like the broad Pacific Ocean was beneath me. The earth, the trees, everything was hid from my sight by a heavy white vapor. I could see beautiful rainbows all about me, and the dewdrops on the great pine tree by my side sparkled like diamonds.

The scene was one that is past description, and seemed to me like heaven — grand, glorious, sublime! But suddenly a change came over the scene

below me. The great white mass began breaking apart, and rolled itself into separate balls, and directly one huge ball came slowly toward me. As it advanced it changed its form and looked like a great snow man coming to devour me. Nearer and nearer it came, and presently it assumed the shape of a monstrous ghost with a snow-white mantle wrapped about it.

I almost held my breath as it passed by me so very close that I could almost touch it. It rose above me and went flying through the heavens. Another and another went by, until at last the valley in all its beauty opened up before me.

As I stood there pondering in my mind the mighty works of nature, my gaze was attracted to an eagle sitting on her nest five hundred feet below me. While I was looking at her she made an effort as if to rise. For a moment the massive wings were silent, and then the noble bird made another strong attempt, but failed.

The air was too heavy; the damp vapors held her down. For a long time she remained quiet, and then the trial was made again, but this time with better success, for slowly but surely she rose. Higher and higher she came, each stroke of her great wings bringing her into purer air. Presently her circles grew wider, and faster she came toward me, until her wings fanned my cheeks, and she soared past me up into the ethereal blue heaven, and vanished from my sight.

In each one of these scenes which I have sketched from nature, there is a grand lesson. Kind reader, while you are in life and health, be up and doing,

and, like the clouds, get above the low things of life. Strive for a higher place, where the heavy, damp air cannot hold you down. Climb up where God is, and then you will have naught to fear. There is so much to do in this life, that, work as hard as we may, when we are called to go it seems but little we have accomplished. Therefore, arise young man, gird on your armor, and like the gallant knight of old, go forth into the grand battle of life shouting the name of Jesus as your watch-word.

Get up out of the heavy vapors of unbelief, for while you are there you cannot move. You must get on to a higher plane. Ah! be like the eagle and soar on wings of love high above all worldly desires. Pray for a fire to be kindled in your soul that will light up your countenance and be the means of bringing weary, sin-sick souls to a peaceful harbor.

We cannot live without the air we breathe, no more can we live without taking God into our souls. If the Bible seems dark to you, and you cannot understand all you would like to about it, be not discouraged, but take what you can understand, and ponder well the admonition it affords, for as the heavy mist that hangs over the mountain disappears when the sun, God's glorious messenger of day, comes forth, even so with us; as we advance in God's cause our darkened views will give way to grander conceptions of the good and true, and we shall see God in all His beauty and know Him.

Be pure in life, pure in all manner of conversation. " Purity, purity like that of the little ermine,

the most fastidious animal in the world. Its hair and skin is white almost as the driven snow, and when they seek to capture the little ermine, for it is very sly and shy when it comes out of its den, they sprinkle dirt and mud along its pathway, and when it returns and sees the dirt and mud in its pathway it will lie down and subject itself to capture and death before it will smirch one of its little white hairs." Dear reader, endeavor to reach that point in life where you will lie down and die any minute before you will smirch your character, or say or do anything that is improper or unclean before the eyes of God. Live while in this life in such a way and manner that when you are gone there will be many left behind that will remember you for your many kind acts and deeds of charity bestowed, then loving hands will raise a monument over you and engrave on its snow-white surface these simple, yet impressive, words:

" He was much loved."

THE WANDERER'S DREAM.

Serve and wait, for when beyond us,
  Lives float off to yonder shore,
Never word or loving service
  Can we render evermore.
And that river may be near us,
  In this murky light unseen,
So let us strew along its borders
  Boughs of living evergreen.

—*Ethel Lynn.*

THE WANDERER'S DREAM.

CHAPTER V.

A FEW years ago a youth of eighteen years, while seeking his fortune in the far West, was overtaken one night on the top of a high mountain by a violent snow-storm. He sought shelter in a cave near by, and made himself as comfortable as possible. The wind blew very hard and sent great gusts of snow whirling into the cave, covering the poor wanderer over.

As he lay there shivering, he thought of his beautiful home twenty-five hundred miles away; he thought of his kind father, of his loving mother, and of sisters dear, and wondered if he would ever see their smiling faces again.

He remembered of hearing persons say that if one had plenty of money they would be ready for any emergency.

But ah! as he lay there on the lonely mountain top all alone, he thought to himself: "If I owned the world, I would give it to be at home with loved ones."

The snow is still falling in feathery flakes, but the dear boy knows it not, for he is asleep, and in his dreams he is transported far away to a distant city near his own home.

As he walks along the streets, he observes the

people as they hurry by; every one seems to be thinking only of themselves, and above all things he notices that but few of the many who pass him by ever smile.

And now as he turns a corner he sees an old man sitting on a box begging alms; his hair is silvered over with many winters, and his face is sad and sorrowful. As he stands looking at the old man, a gentleman handsomely dressed passes by and drops a piece of silver in the old man's hand; he takes the money and thanks the gentleman for it. But as he does so the wanderer sees no change on that poor wrinkled face, no bright smile lighting up that sorrowful countenance. The same lonely gaze remains. But as he stands there he sees a lady stop by the old man's side, and put her gloved hand tenderly on his shoulder; she is speaking, but he cannot hear what she is saying to the old man.

But as the dear lady turns to go away, he sees the old man lift his eyes, and over his face there is diffused such a light that the wrinkles are hardly discernable. Ah, yes ! there is actually a smile on the withered lips.

The lady is gone, and now comes a little flower-girl; she steps before the old man, who looks at her wistfully, but does not speak; presently she goes up to him and puts her arms about his neck and says: " Oh! you poor old man. I have no money to give you, but I can put my little arms around your neck and love you, and smile just as though you were my own dear grandpa, can't I? "

And as the wanderer looks he sees the old man take the sweet little girl in his arms, and as he does

so the silver falls to the pavement, but he heeds it not, for oh what is money to him compared with what he now holds in his arms? And as the tears streamed down the old man's cheeks, the wanderer cast his eyes above, and lo, an angel was descending. Nearer and nearer it came until it hovered directly over the old man and child, and then it spake these words:

"Ah! my little one, 'tis not on earth that Heaven's justice ends; you have by your kind act laid up for yourself a crown in Heaven.

"The smile you gave the poor old man cost you nothing, yet it is beyond price to the lonely one, the sad and cheerful, the lost and forsaken. It disarms malice, subdues temper, turns enmity to love, revenge to kindness, and paves the darkest paths with gems of sunlight. A smile on the brow betrays a kind heart, a pleasant friend; a smile resembles an angel of Paradise.

"I therefore charge you, little one, to use the old man kindly until I come to take him home, and then you shall be richly rewarded."

The angel then ascended into Heaven, and as it vanished from sight the wanderer took a solemn vow that henceforth during his life he would scatter more sunshine than he had ever done before.

Just as he finished his vow he woke; he was very cold and hungry, but the dream clung to him, and, kind reader, it is clinging to him yet. Remember, dear reader, that goodness of heart is man's best treasure, honor and noblest acquisition. It is the ray of His divinity which dignifies humanity.

Also, that as each ray of the sunbeam aids in the

production of the photograph, so each deed, however trifling it may seem, is an element in the development of our moral being. The tender words and loving deeds which we scatter for the hearts which are nearest to us are immortal seed that will spring up in everlasting beauty, not only in our own lives, but in the lives of those born after us.

Love ye one another, and be ye tender-hearted and true; for this we owe to Christ.

THE SUNSET OF LIFE.

Morn is the time to act, noon to endure;
But O! if thou wouldst keep thy spirit pure,
Turn from the beaten path, by worldlings trod,
Go forth at eventide, in heart to walk with God.

—*Mrs. E. C. Embury.*

THE SUNSET OF LIFE.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT a grand sight it is to witness a glorious sunset. For instance, it has been raining all day, but toward evening the dark clouds that have hung over us like a pall begin to break away, here and there we catch a glimpse of light through a rifted cloud, and presently the clouds roll together in huge masses, and the sun's rays shining on these bring the rainbow to our view in all its beauty.

Around the sun everything is tinted with soft, mellow light, and finally, when the glorious messenger of day sinks to rest, we exclaim, Oh! where is the artist that can paint such a scene? Our cradle is where we start to run the race of life, and could more persons than do realize that this is but the rugged road on which we are traveling to the life eternal, life beyond the grave, to that divine abode where the sun never sets and all is joy and peace; could they but realize this, our lives would be happier while here on earth.

How very different it would be if we but used life as we should, "schooling each wandering thought to a higher state," taking our brother by the hand and lifting him up, endeavoring at all times to raise fallen humanity rather than to lower it.

Remember, kind reader, though you be rich, the time will come when you will sleep by the poor man's side. Then how much better off will you be than he is?

God has given us golden opportunities and we ought to improve them while it is yet called to-day. Look about you, young men, and see the heights by great men reached and kept. They did not reach them in a single day nor hour, but they attained them by diligent work, " while their companions slept they were toiling upward in the night."

Considering the uncertainty of life, it behooves us all to guard every flying moment, watching with zealous care every fleeting hour, rearing for ourselves lives fit for presentation at the judgment seat of God.

How terrible the sight to see a young man just verging into the stern realities of life, led astray by being buoyed up with false hopes held out to him by those who have no other desire in life but to destroy the good and pure about them.

And then to behold that young man when he awakes to a full realization of his condition. The veil is now torn from his eyes and he beholds himself as he is. Ah! the sunset of his life is indeed dark and gloomy, there is no bright rays to light up his pathway, no one near to cheer him. His false associates have gone and he finds himself alone in the deepest abyss of gloom and despair.

Fond memory — the only paradise out of which man cannot be driven — is all that is left him. He engages in silent reverie and presently a vision comes

before him, ah, 'tis his mother! How vividly he remembers when she toiled and labored for him in the years that are now numbered with the past. She is older to-night than when he saw her last, her face is not so smooth and fair as it once was, for time and sorrow have placed many wrinkles there. And her hair that was once as black as a raven's wing is now streaked with gray. The vision vanishes, and the poor wanderer slowly repeats these words:

Her spirit long ago took its flight
To heaven's fair city above;
Where angels reign forever bright
In the realms of God's eternal love.

I stood on board a ship one day after a severe storm. 'Twas evening when the dark clouds lifted from off the ocean and revealed to my sight the sun, slowly sinking to rest.

The white-capped waves, as they leaped high in air and came in contact with the bright rays of the sun, were lit up with dazzling brilliancy. It was indeed to me an impressive sight to see the glorious orb of day sink into the ocean. I watched it as it seemed to sink in the water, and slowly, peacefully, and noiselessly descended into the mighty deep, it seemed to linger for a moment — as if reluctant to part — as it passed from sight, and then lighting up the sky with a lurid light, it trembled on the water a moment and then disappeared.

For a long time I stood there on deck thinking of the goodness and greatness of God, and of the time when the sunset of my life would come, until the stars came out and reminded me that it was time

to go to my room. And now, kind reader, let me ask you to so live that when you come to die it will be a sweet relief for you to know that you are only falling asleep in Jesus, as calm and peaceful as the sun set on the ocean.

" Fill your heart with pure thoughts, they will be as flowers that are imperishable; they will bloom over you when you are no more; they will spring up beneath your feet in Heaven, and delight you with an eternal odor, for they are of the soul.

Lose not a moment; prepare for the great, the awful journey from sorrow to bliss, from corruption to immortality.

HELON, THE WANDERER.

Hope the best, get ready for the worst, and take what God sends.
—*Malherbe.*

HELON, THE WANDERER.

CHAPTER VII.

THE rays of the morning sun fell rosy and beautiful on the city gates; and from the distant hills came the poor, anxious to begin their work. From out the city rose the sharp clink of the hammer, the hum of moving wheels and the tread of multitudes already astir.

Suddenly from a distant part of the city there came a piercing cry that sent terror to the hearts of those who heard it. "Room for the leper." Then from the distant hills echo tauntingly answered: "Room for the leper."

Men, women and children instantly turned aside and let him pass. Onward through the open gate the poor wanderer passed with sack-cloth girdled about his loins and a thick covering on his lips.

Slowly and painfully the forsaken man moved along, crying in a sorrowful tone: "Unclean! Unclean!" It was the middle of the Judean summer and the loftiest of Judah's nobles, with clear and flashing eye, had watched the budding leaves put forth. He was young and eminently beautiful and life in eloquent fullness mantled on his lips and sparkled in his glance, and about him was a gracious pride that every eye followed with rich benisons.

With the balmy air of summer there had come a

stupor over his frame, which nothing could drive away. The blood ran sluggishly in his veins, and o'er his eyes there crept a film that almost excluded the light. His limbs seemed fettered with heavy chains and his voice was changed from its clear, silver key, into a languid moan. He fought the stern malady with all the manhood in him, but to no purpose, for he was finally compelled to yield to its overpowering grasp.

Then for many days he lay like one asleep; his pretty skin became dry and bloodless, and white scales encircled with deep purple covered him over. His beautiful pink nails grew black and fell away from the lifeless flesh about them, and the lines deepened beneath the hard, unmoistened scales and from their edges grew rank, white hair. Then Helon was pronounced a leper.

Day was just breaking, and the holy priest of God stood at the altar of the temple. A low chant rose through the arches of the roof and there alone wasted to a ghastly skeleton. Helon knelt.

The echoes of the mournful strains died away in the distance, and he rose up, lowered his head unto the sprinkled ashes, threw off his beautiful raiment for the leper's garb, and with sack-cloth round him and his lip hid in a loathsome covering, stood waiting for his sentence. Then spake the priest:

"Depart from the temple of God, thou leprous child of Israel, and take up thy dwelling in the desert places of the land. Shun every city; keep aloof from every habitation, and wet not thy lips in streams which flow past human dwellings. You

must not milk the goat, pluck the grain, or lie down to sleep underneath the spreading branches of the trees. Henceforth the wilderness must be your only resting place."

Without being permitted to take leave of those he loved, not even her whose name and image were woven in the very fibers of his heart, the doomed man was driven from the city, heart-broken and alone, to die. One day at noon, with the burning rays of the sun beaming down on his head, Helon knelt at a stagnant pool in the depths of a lonely swamp and bathed his scorching, leprous brow. He also lifted the loathsome water to his parched lips, and prayed that he might be permitted to die and end his agony.

As he knelt there by the pool, his mind went back to the bright, beautiful past. He thought of the time when he was surrounded with all the luxuries of life, of the time when he joined in the exciting chase, and with heaving breast listened to the shrill note of the huntsman's horn. Then, swift as a flash, came the thought; Exiled! banished! It was more than Helon could stand, and as the scalding tears coursed down his dry, sunken cheeks, he put his hands over his face and groaned aloud, "Banished! banished! O, holy priest of the temple, hidden in thy cruel sentence are ten thousand deaths!"

As the suffering Helon crouched on the ground, he was startled by the sound of approaching footsteps. Being too weak to flee, he drew the covering closer on his lips, crying: "Unclean! unclean!" Then hiding himself in the folds of the

coarse sack-cloth, he stretched himself on the ground and waited for the stranger to pass.

Nearer and nearer he came, until he stood by the wanderer's prostrate form. Then he spoke his name. "Helon!" At the sound of that sweet voice, the dull, feeble pulse of the disease awoke, and, with a restoring thrill, sped beneath the burning, leprous scales. "Helon, arise!"

The voice was like the master-tone of a rich instrument, and was to Helon's crushed and broken spirit what dew from Heaven is to the famished flowers. Forgetting he was a leper, he rose and stood before him who had tracked him to his lair. Helon looked at the stranger with mingled awe and surprise. His raiment was simple and much worn. In fact, there was nothing about him to denote princely lineage, save the command which sat serenely throned on his countenance.

When he smiled, he seemed touched with the open innocence of a child. His eyes were blue and calm, as is the sky in the serenest noon, and his dark, luxuriant hair fell in beautiful ringlets to his shoulders.

The stranger gazed earnestly at Helon awhile, and then, stooping down, he took a little water in his hand, laid it on Helon's brow, and said: "Be thou clean."

Instantly the dry scales fell from him, the blood leaped with a delicious coolness through his veins, and his dry palms grew moist, while over his brow the dewy softness of an infant stole.

In our own beautiful land there are many lepers,

differing in many respects to those of Helon's day, yet they are, in every sense of the word, lepers.

They are called sinful lepers. The disease lays hold upon the heart, and if it was not for the victim's actions, the world would know nothing about the dreadful malady. But, try as they may to conceal the fact, the disease is sure to come to the surface, sooner or later.

In our country, lepers are permitted to mingle with the pure in heart without being molested. And just here is one of the greatest wrongs of to-day.

Young women should see to it that lepers are banished from their parlors and from their society. Kind reader, I want to impress upon your mind a solemn truth, one which I hope you will treasure up long after you have thrown this book aside. It is this: We may escape banishment and exile while in this world, but in the world to come there is no plan given whereby we may elude the stern sentence of the "Great High Priest," "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting torment."

Remember, if you are a wanderer in the dark wilderness of sin and sorrow, heavy-laden, stricken, crushed, a prey to evil thoughts, feeling that you are doomed, undone, and that you will soon be stranded on the rock-bound coast of despair, there is One who is able to give you comfort, ease and happiness. One who can cleanse you of your leprosy, cause your heart to leap for joy, and your eyes to sparkle with delight.

His name is Jesus. The same dear Christ that lifted Helon, the Wanderer, out of his wretchedness

and woe in the wilderness of far-away Judea. Be warned, learn righteousness, and reverence Heaven. Then, when the end of time comes, you will hear the same rich voice that greeted Helon's ear crying: "Arise, and dwell with Me forever."

Fritz, the Little Hunchback.

Our many deeds, the thoughts that we have thought,
They go out from us thronging every hour;
And in them all is folded up a power
That on the earth doth move them to and fro;
And mighty are the marvels they have wrought
In hearts we know not, and may never know.

—*F. W. Faber.*

FRITZ, THE LITTLE HUNCHBACH.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE following story is one that I have caught from the drift. It was floating along on the great sea of literature, where I found it. But now I have dressed it up, and will start it out into the busy world again.

A great many years ago, the Austrians made many attempts to take Switzerland. They often invaded the country, but were as often repulsed and driven back by the hardy Swiss peasants.

The Swiss were very strongly fortified, the Alps mountains affording them a splendid rendezvous. At various places on the mountains were built large piles of wood, ready at a given signal to light, in order that the peasants could prepare for battle as soon as the beacon light shone out over the misty mountain tops.

In a little hut built far up the height of a mountain, there lived a poor peasant and his family, consisting of himself, wife and two boys. One of these (Little Fritz) fell when very small and broke his back, making him a cripple for life, being what we would call a hunchback.

The little fellow often bemoaned his fate, and when he would see his older brother take his gun

on his shoulder and go out to hunt, he would steal away to his room and weep as though his heart would break.

Many times he would stay in his room until his mother would finally have to go to him and talk with him until the shadows lifted from his soul.

During these interviews his mother would say to him: "Never mind, Fritz, my noble boy, your time to do good will come. God knows you; He sees you; and who knows but what God intends that you shall carve an image or paint a picture that will thrill the hearts of those who look upon the work and cause them to speak in praise of the artist. Yes, Fritz, God gives all his children an opportunity to do good. Be patient, then, my dear one, your time will surely come."

One day little Fritz took his crutches and hobbled up the mountainside to where one of the beacons was built.

When he arrived at the place he found that the sentinel left to guard the place was gone. For a moment Fritz looked about him, and then he said to himself, "Why can't I play sentinel?" For an instant he remained silent and then said aloud, "If I can't be a great soldier, I am sure I can fire the beacon if necessary."

So suiting the action to the word, he began hobbling back and forth at his post. Presently, as he looked far away before him to where the woods divided from the plain, he saw the gleam of a spear — yes they were spears. He could see them flashing brightly in the evening sunlight. He could see

the line stretching far away, looking like a great silver river flowing through the valley.

For some time Fritz stood watching the bright array, and then he hurried a little way down the mountainside as fast as he could, and called loudly for the sentinel. But no sentinel answered. Again and again he called, but no voice answered to the call.

Something must be done. He turned and climbed back to the height and fired the beacon. In a moment the bright flames reached high toward Heaven, and now beacon answered beacon, and in a short time a hundred tongues of flame were proclaiming danger to the people. Just as the careless sentinel reached his post he saw little Fritz fall pierced through by a bullet from the gun of an Austrian scout.

The sentinel took the boy up in his arms and carried him down the mountainside to his home. When they laid him on the bed he took his mother's hand and said; "Mother, my work is done. God has at last seen fit to crown my death with a grand victory. I have saved Switzerland." When he had spoken these words he died, and so was free from this sore trial here on earth. And so we see how little Fritz saved Switzerland, and in all probability it is owing to Fritz, the little Swiss hunchback, that Switzerland is what she is to-day.

Ah, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." When we see Him take such a poor, deformed creature as little Fritz, and use him for such a great work, we should go forward with renewed energy and hope. Remember that

no good the humblest of us has wrought ever dies. There is one long, unerring memory in the universe, out of which nothing dies.

"A chill autumn wind, blowing over a sterile plain, bore within its arms a little seed torn with ruthless force from its matrix on a lofty tree, and dropped the seed upon the sand to perish. A bright-winged beetle, weary with flight and languid with the chilly air, rested for a moment on the arid plain. The little seed dropped Æolus served to satisfy the hunger of the beetle, which presently winged its flight to the margin of a swift-running stream that had sprung from the mountainside, and, cleaving a bed through rocks of granite, went gaily laughing upon its cheery way down to the ever-rolling sea.

"Sipping a drop of the crystal flood, the beetle crawled within a protecting ledge, and, folding its wings, lay down to pleasant dreams. The Ice King passed along and touched the insect in its sleep. Its mission was fulfilled; but the conflict of the seasons continued until the white destroyer melted in the breath of balmy spring. And then a sunbeam sped to the chink wherein the body of the insect lay, and searching for the little seed entombed, but not destroyed, invited it to "join the jubilee of returning life and hope."

Under the soft wooing of the peopled ray the little seed began to swell with joy, tiny rootlets were developed within the body of the protecting beetle, a minute stem shot out of its gaping mouth, and lo! a mighty tree had been carried from the desert, saved from the frosts of winter, nurtured

and started upon its mission of life and usefulness by an humble insect that had perished with the flowers. The agent had passed away, but, building better than he knew, the wide-spreading tree remained by the margin of the life-giving stream, a shelter and a rest to the weary traveler upon life's great highway through many fretful centuries.

A child abandoned by its mother to perish in an Egyptian marsh may become the instrument to deliver a nation from bondage, and an unostentatious man, unknown to fortune and to fame, may become the agent of a mighty work, destined to benefit the human race as long as it may last upon the earth. Oh! blessed reader, when discouraged, think of "Little Fritz," and of the bright-winged beetle; then press nobly onward toward the mark of your high calling, and after awhile God will give you a crown of life.

THE OLD MAN'S NEW SONG.

Hark, the pearly air is trembling,
  Liquid music floats along;
Angels, in sweet joy assembling,
  Thrill the skies with heavenly song.

—*F. G. Holland.*

THE OLD MAN'S NEW SONG.

CHAPTER IX.

A FEW years ago a missionary and his wife were driving through a desolate wood in the far South, *en route* to one of their mission posts.

The afternoon was far spent when they came to a halt beside a beautiful spring of cool, sparkling water. All day long they had journeyed without food or rest, and as they had several miles yet to drive, they thought it prudent to allow their horse to rest, and also refresh themselves by partaking of the lunch they had brought with them.

When they had finished their repast the lady went to the carriage and got her bible, then seating herself on a moss-covered log she began reading the ninety-eighth psalm:

"O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvelous things." Here she was interrupted by the thick underbrush parting, and an old man of threescore and ten coming out close to where she sat.

He was clothed in rags, and strapped on his feet with pieces of bark were what was once called shoes, but now so full of holes that they were past recognition; out from under the torn and slouched hat the long white hair fell in unkempt and matted locks upon his shoulders.

In his hands he held a strong staff, on which he stood leaning, looking closely at the missionary and his wife. The lady addressed him kindly, and after talking to him for a short time she learned that although seventy years old he knew nothing of Jesus, and had been to church but twice in his life.

In all her missionary work the kind lady had never been more interested about the salvation of a soul than now, and she began at once to tax her mind for means whereby she could reach the dear old man's heart and convince him of the love Jesus had for him.

For a moment she engaged in silent prayer: "Oh, God! Thou who hast never forsaken me in all the past be with me now, and give me, oh God! the key that will unlock the rusty door of this old man's heart, and Thine shall be the glory forever. Amen."

Looking up into the old man's face, she said, "Dear old man, can you read?"

"No, I cannot read," he answered, and silently shook his head.

"Did you ever hear any one talk of Jesus?" she asked.

"Yes," said he, "many, many years ago I heard a lady talk about a good man she called Jesus, and I heard her sing the new song, and ever since that time it has been ringing in my ears."

While the old man was talking, a bright thought came to the blessed lady: if she could only find out what the old man's new song was she felt sure that with it she could let Jesus into his soul.

" Can you tell me some of the words of the song you heard? " she asked.

" No, no," replied the old man, mournfully. " I only wish I knew them all. I would sing them from morning until night."

Taking a " Hymnal " from the carriage, the lady began singing one song after another, asking the old man if he recognized the new song; but he only shook his head; evidently he had not heard his beautiful song yet.

The patient lady had almost given up all hope of finding the song, when she commenced singing, " Rock of ages cleft for me." Instantly the old man's face lightened up, and he exclaimed, " That's it! O you have found my new song. I am so glad, so glad."

For a moment the lady was so amused to think of such an old song being called new, that she could hardly refrain from laughing. Several times she sang the song over, while the old man bowed his head on his staff and wept for joy.

When she ceased singing, the old man raised his wrinkled, tear-stained face and said: " Dearest lady, take your pencil and mark the new song, and give it to me; then, although I cannot read a single line, I can turn to the page and remember how grand it was when by this old spring I heard your sweet voice filling the gloomy forest with melody."

She granted him his request; and just as the sun was disappearing behind the distant hill-tops, throwing his bright, glittering rays aslant through the tall pines, covered with climbing vines, the trio knelt in prayer.

As the voice of that dear woman ascended to Heaven, there was a hushed silence all around; the birds ceased their merry warbling, as if listening to that voice so full of pathos; a dove perched on a limb directly over the kneeling group, caught the words of the prayer and sent them to her mate in accents low, who answered back, "Here, love; here, love."

Even the spring sparkled brighter than ever, and went hurriedly on its way, bearing on its bosom the words of that earnest prayer of thankfulness.

In the court of Heaven a solemn hush slept undisturbed. A deep, mysterious and awful calm. Through the spirit world on noiseless wings, swept host on host of white-robed angels. God, the Father, sat on the great white throne. Jesus stood at His right hand, His face wearing the same patient smile it wore when He stretched Himself upon the cross to die for a world lost in sin.

The angels stood motionless, looking over the battlements of Heaven at the scene below. When the prayer was ended, three angels, Pity, Love and Mercy, spread their snowy wings, and after hovering for a moment over the throne, commenced singing, "Rock of ages, cleft for me."

Instantly it was taken up by every voice in the realm, and sent rolling through the streets of the beautiful city.

* * * * * * *

Bidding the old man good-by, the missionary and his wife stepped into their carriage and drove away. When a long way off they looked back, and there, among the deepening shadows stood the

old man, now a child of Jesus, looking at the new song.

* * * * * * *

In Heaven, that realm where the rainbow never fades, where the stars spread out like the islands that slumber on the ocean, the old man now sings his new song and patiently waits for the coming of that dear one who sang to him beside the woodland spring, making his heart so glad that bright summer evening in the long ago.

THE HERMIT'S STORY.

Wine has drowned more than the sea.
—*Publius Syrus.*

Wine is like anger, for it makes us strong,
Blind and impatient, and it leads wrong.
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long.
—*Crabbe.*

THE HERMIT'S STORY.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE traveling in the West several years ago, I chanced, on one occasion, to come upon a little hut nestled at the foot of a mountain. The only occupant of this hut was an old man whose head was silvered over with the frosts of many winters. At the time I speak of, I was lost and had been wandering about in the mountains several days.

After I had succeeded in making my pony comfortable for the night, I followed my host into the hut.

A gun and dog, an old table and some deer skins piled on the stone floor, completed the contents of the humble dwelling.

Completed, did I say? Yes, but not so, for on the rude wall there hung the picture of a lovely young girl. Lovely, did I say? Ah! I have never seen a fairer face. To-day as I write, I can see those beautiful blue eyes; eyes that seemed to look into the depths of my soul; and that face, pale but patient, trustful and loving, and although lines of sorrow were visible about her mouth, yet she was beautiful; and the golden curls that clustered about her fair and gentle brow made her look like an angel. In fact, her face was one which when seen could never be forgotten. But to my story. The

old man hastily prepared my supper and I went to eating, for I was very hungry, having had nothing to eat for several days but dried venison and hard bread.

After I had finished my repast, and engaged the old man in conversation he related the following story. "Young man, do you see that picture? (pointing to the one I have described.) That is all I have to remind me of an only daughter who is now in Heaven, sent there by my own hand. Several years ago," he continued, "I lived in a small town in the Eastern States with my daughter Nettie, my wife having died when Nettie was quite small. I became addicted to strong drink, and as Nettie grew to womanhood I became more and more a drunkard. Poor child, it nearly broke her heart to see me sinking lower and lower each day, but she bore up bravely under it all, and would often go to the little church that stood close by and pray hour after hour for her poor, misguided father. Time and again she would come and on bended knees plead earnestly with me, but to no purpose, for I would curse her and thrust her from me. Oh, God! how my heart yearns for her to-night.

"Could I but take her in my arms once more and hear her say: 'Father, dearest father, I forgive you.' oh, how happy I would be! But alas! alas! that can never be, for she is gone — gone — and forever. I went from bad to worse, and one day when I had been drinking more than usual, Nettie met me at the door with outstretched arms and tearful eyes, and I — I, oh, God! how I tremble as I think of it — I dealt her a blow that laid

her at my feet a corpse. After that I knew no more; when I awoke I found that kind friends had been busy, and my darling Nettie was ready to go to her last resting place. Every one was her friend, and from all around people came flocking in to take a last look at my dear Nettie.

" Along the crowded path they bore her, pure as the newly-fallen snow that covered it, and the old church received her in its quiet shade. They carried her to one old nook where she had many and many a time sat musing and praying for me, and laid their burden softly on the pavement; the light streamed on it through the colored window, a window where the boughs of trees were rustling in the breeze and where birds sang sweetly all day long. With every breath of air that stirred among the branches in the sunshine, some trembling, changing light, would fall upon the grave.

" On her fair face there was no trace of earthly cares; her sufferings and fatigues were all gone, and peace and perfect happiness were borne to her. Stern remorse came upon me and I fled to the mountains, where I have been ever since.

" And during the bitter years that have passed I have never ceased pleading with my God for forgiveness, and, my friend, as I grow older I feel that He has heard my prayer, and that I will be permitted to meet my Nettie in Heaven's fair city above; yes, I feel that God has forgiven me."

When the poor old hermit finished his story he was crying bitterly. For some time all was still; no sound to break the silence save the distant bark

of a coyote and the sobs that came from the broken-hearted old man.

Finally he wiped the tears away and continued: "Young man, allow me to give you a few words of advice. Far away to the Northwest, you can see from my cabin door, Mount Hood. As one approaches this wonderful monument of nature — covered with the snow and ice of centuries — their pathway lies among beautiful flowers whose fragrance fills the air with sweet perfumes. Birds flit from bush to bush, chirping glad songs to their Maker, flowers sending out delightful odor, and old ocean wafting his bracing breeze, all combined makes me feel as though they were in an earthly paradise. As you continue the ascent the verdure gradually changes.

"The flowers are stunted and not bright like the ones below. The birds are but few in number, and are not so merry as those you saw among the beautiful flowers farther down. As you climb higher and higher, you find that the flowers and birds have disappeared, and vegetation of all kinds seems suddenly to have gone out of existence.

"On you go, wending your way through drifts of snow, every step attended with great danger, until at last you can go no farther, for the air is so cold that it almost freezes your lungs to breathe it.

"Directly in front of you are crevices in the ice. One false step and you would be precipitated into the yawning abyss below. From this tour on the mountain learn this moral, and let it sink deep into your heart.

"While you live in holiness, while you live and

let live, trying at all times to do what is right, building for yourself a character that will not be destroyed by the storms of life, you are in the land of flowers. On the other hand, if you join the society of the wicked, and turn a deaf ear to all morality, then you are in a cold and barren world, with the snow and ice about you and the waves of adversity ready to sweep over you. Young man, live among the flowers. Do not give up home for the saloon and card table. Lay aside all foul and obscene books, for they are written for the express purpose of demoralizing morality. Above all things, let accursed liquor alone, and fight against it continually, and if you are ever tempted to partake of the vile stuff, just stop and think of the old man in the mountains, and let it alone — let it alone."

I left the old man to his solitude, and went my way. Many changes have taken place since then, but I have never forgotten the old hermit's story.

Young man, are you to-day wandering away from God? If so, think of the old mountain hermit, and learn a lesson from his fearful suffering. It may be you have a kind, loving mother that sits at home and prays for you. Can you not see that you are breaking her heart and hurrying her from earth by your waywardness? Ah! as you stand at the bar holding a glass of liquor in your hand, consider which is best: to give up position, honor, home, mother, heaven, God and life eternal, or the cursed poison before you. Ponder these things well, and remember that there is but one certain thing in your life, and that is you must lose it.

WHAT IS MAN?

"A holy mystery. A part of earth—a part of Heaven. A part, great GOD of Thee."

"Human flesh can be pierced through with the sword or with the dagger; but no material blade can be brought into contact with the human self."

"Man's form can be perforated with the missiles of fire-lock weapons; but no projectile, whether of lead or of iron, whether driven by gunpowder force or by any other force, can be made to enter man's spirit."

WHAT IS MAN?

CHAPTER XI.

"How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate how wonderful is man!"

—*Young.*

"EVERY man, in every condition, is great. It is only our diseased sight which makes him little. A man is great as a man, be he where or what he may. The grandeur of his nature turns to insignificance all outward distinctions. His powers of intellect, of conscience, of love, of knowing God, of perceiving the beautiful, of acting on his own mind, on outward nature, and on his fellow-creatures — these are glorious prerogatives."

Man is a human being, distinguished from all other animals by the powers of speech and reason, as well as by his shape and dignified aspect. Man is a being created by an all-wise God for a special purpose.

At the presen. time there is extant in our own beautiful land a great deal of skepticism, which in *theology* is a doubting of the truth of revelation, or a denial of the divine origin of the Christian religion, or of the being, perfections, or truth of God. On every hand we hear persons proclaiming the absurdity of a doctrine which teaches us that there is a glorious future where the blood-washed soul of

man will reign with its Maker forever and forever. "Let no despondency, or timidity, or secret *skepticism*, lead any one to doubt whether this blessed prospect will be realized."

There are people in the world who oppose every good move that is made; who would, if they had the power, hang the Heavens about with crape; throw a shroud over the beautiful and life-giving bosom of the planet; pick the bright stars from the sky; veil the sun in clouds; pluck the silver moon from her place in the firmament; shut up the gardens and fields, and all the flowers with which they are bedecked, and doom the world to an atmosphere of gloom and cheerlessness. There is no reason or morality in this, and there is still less religion.

But, from the birth of Christ to the present, there has never been a time when such persons could not be found, and as Christ was repeatedly told to His face, that He was a cheat and a fraud and a fearful impostor, it is not strange that we find people in this day and age denying the Bible and its precious promises.

Thanks be to God, however, all the bitter invectives that have ever been launched against the Christian religion have come to naught; while on the other hand the Church has pushed onward and upward, surmounting all obstacles, until now every civilized land in the world feels its influence, and stands ready to testify for Christ.

The very thought of making a failure in life strikes terror to the heart of every reasonable creature. Every true man desires above everything

else to make life a success. Is it not strange, therefore, with the history of the world before us to lead, guide and direct us, that so many persons are failures in life?

Strange! No, not strange when we think of the cause to which all failures are attributable, namely, *relying on ourselves.*

When the book called "The Age of Reason" came out, its author thought that he stood on the top round of the ladder of fame. He thought that he had given to the world a work that would make him famous throughout the world. Again, when Ingersoll put forth his work entitled, "The Mistakes of Moses," he thought he had accomplished a great work; but, I fancy, if he could but have realized that by writing that work — and similar ones — he had not only shut himself out of the promised land, but had also lost his last opportunity of even viewing it, he would have been filled with woe instead of joy.

Famous such men indeed become, but it is a fame like that which Saul enjoyed, as he went forth on his journey to Damascus, bent on slaughtering the innocents.

But, as Saul fell under the powerful light which shone round about him, even so will the works of every *infidel* fall and crumble away when such a *light* as that which emanates from a book called "Ben Hur" falls upon them.

Ingersoll's book is a failure because it is founded on the ever-shifting sands of waste and denial. Lew Wallace's book is a success because it is founded on Christ.

The former lowers us in our own estimation, and endeavors to rob us of all the bright hopes we entertain for the future.

The study of "Ben Hur" tends to raise our minds to the Supreme Ruler of all worlds — to expand our views of His infinite knowledge and wisdom — to excite our gratitude and our admiration of the beneficent designs which appear in all His arrangements — to guard us against erroneous conceptions of His providential procedure — in fact, "Ben Hur" must always be interesting to every person who wishes to enlarge his intellectual views, and to make progress in the knowledge of God. I can say of the author of "Ben Hur," "his pen is mightier than his sword."

From the time of creation until the present, there has existed in the great throbbing heart of humanity a feeling like that of the Psalmist, when he wrote: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!" In the eighth psalm, we read where David went forth and looked into the firmament, where he beheld, in all their glorious splendor, the twinkling stars. As he gazed on the beautiful scene spread before him, he was deeply moved, and gave vent to his feelings in these words: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

There can be no doubt but what David realized that he was, in some way, closely connected with God, and, to a certain extent, had some idea of the

magnitude of God's universe. Yet how very different the same stars appear to us to-day when viewed by the light of science?

At the time David went forth to look at the heavens, he saw the same number of stars that we can see on a clear night with the naked eye, viz., twenty-seven hundred. But with the aid of powerful instruments, we find that a survey of the heavens reveals the fact that there are five thousand million worlds, each many thousand times larger than ours.

By means of the telescope, we have found hanging on the rim of these planets thick clouds, dimly outlined with stars; and no doubt, if we could invent an instrument two thousand times greater than our present one, we would ascertain the fact that there are five billion worlds greater than ours. By the help of the telescope, combined with the art of measuring the distances and magnitude of the heavenly bodies, our views of the grandeur of the Almighty, of the plenitude of His power, and of the extent of His universal empire are extended far beyond what could have been conceived in former ages. We can now plainly perceive that the kingdom of God is not only "an everlasting dominion," but that it extends through the unlimited regions of space, comprehending within its vast circumference thousands of suns and ten thousands of worlds, all ranged in majestic order, at immense distances from one another, and all supported and governed by Him who rides on the Heaven of heavens, whose greatness is unsearchable, and whose understanding is infinite.

This instrument may, therefore, be considered as a providential gift bestowed upon mankind, to serve in the meantime as a temporary substitute for those powers of rapid flight with which the seraphim are endowed, and for those superior faculties of motion with which man himself may be invested, when he arrives at the summit of moral perfection.

As we meditate upon such wonderful works, a secret longing takes possession of our souls to come into closer relationship with the Creator. We long to behold Him; but He is invisible, and, in all probability, will remain so through all the coming ages, for it is one of God's great plans to remain invisible. And, in this respect, God is like the man of which we are writing, for he, too, is invisible.

All we ever see of man is his actions. We cannot see a man's thought, but we can see the work of thought, and from this we judge of what man's thought is.

To make this plain, I will illustrate.

*I see a man go into a great pine forest in Maine; on his shoulder he carries an ax. I know by this that he intends chopping some timber. I have, therefore, by this outward action of the invisible, found out so much of the man's thought. I follow him into the forest and see him stop before a pine tree. After surveying it from top to bottom, he commences chopping into the trunk and continues until the great tree falls. Then he measures along the body of the tree with the two-foot rule marked on his ax-handle until he measures eighty feet. Then he cuts the log off, and goes away. Now, I

*The illustration is taken from a sermon delivered by Bishop Foster.

know so much of the man's thought, but, I say, why was this? Why did he cut the beautiful tree down and leave it lying there on the ground? If I was to leave the scene now I would never know why it was done, or what great work the man had in his mind.

I wait a few days and I see two strange men come with a team of oxen and drag the log to the river bank; then they turn and go away. Now, I say, I know what was in the man's mind when he entered the forest with his axe; but I can see no sense in leaving the log there on the river bank.

I wait and in a few days men come and roll the log into the river, and make it fast to some other logs that are there, and then they get on the raft thus formed and drift down the stream until they come to a saw-mill. Here they tie the raft and go away.

The next day a skilled workman hoists the log onto a car which carries it to a large saw that begins cutting into it. When this man finishes his work, I cannot see my log. It has now become a square piece of timber. I know now what the man's thought was when he carried his ax into the great pine forest. But why was the tree cut? I can see no use in doing the work whatever.

If I was taken from the scene now, I would never know all the man's thought. I wait a few days, and men come and take the piece of timber and lay it on the ground near the river, and then place other queer-shaped pieces with it. Men from foreign lands come and put pieces of iron and brass in the frame now going up. The work continues, and the

queer-shaped mass begins assuming symmetry, form and beauty. Finally, one day a great many men come and take the blocks away from the huge structure, and when the word is given, it floats out into the Penobscot River, and after dipping her bow deep in the water, sails away, a great ship that is to carry precious souls and glad tidings across the ocean, from one continent to another, throughout the entire world.

Now we have the man's thought complete. It was in his mind from the very first to build a ship. God is invisible. No man hath ever gazed upon Him. Christ came out of the bosom of God, His exponent.

The outward form of man is only a shell, an instrument given by God to do the will of the mind and invisible man.

To prove this assertion I quote from II. Cor. v. chap., 1 verse: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." In our journey through life how often we come in contact with persons who think they are divinely beautiful, and who think only of their outward form.

Ah, how very foolish for us to pride ourselves on our beauty, for if this was one of the great essentials there are many things we could find that far surpass us in point of beauty. The horse with flowing mane, proudly-arched neck and dilated nostril, prancing over the green sward, is so far ahead of us in beauty that there is no comparison. My dear reader, it is our invisible man which

we should treasure and guard. This outward covering will return to dust shortly, but the man, the inner substance, will live on and on forever. We have spoken of man's thought, and in order to come to an understanding of the subject in hand, it will be necessary to talk awhile about God's thought.

Far back in the distant eternities *Man* was in God's thought. Go with me back to the time when the world was not, when there was nothing but a great abysm of empty space. God commences his wonderful work. Great masses are rolled together in globes or balls. A thousand years pass away, and then a heavy vapor comes over all, hanging like great festoons around the yet imperfect world. Thousands of years passed away and great heat fell upon the masses and they melted and settled to a hard, level plain.

Then after waiting a million years, for mind God was in no hurry to finish His work, an atmosphere begins to pervade the universe. Springs, rivers, rivulets, lakes and oceans commence flowing, carving hills, mountains and valleys out of the great mass. Now I can see what God had in His mind when He began His work. But why did He do this? I can't see that it is any better than to have left it as it was.

But I wait a thousand years and I see a green mantle springing up over the earth, and plants in rich profusion spread their leaves.

When I see this I say I know what all of God's work was for; He just made the great, rough earth for the grass to grow on. But what did He do this for? I can see no use in it.

But I wait for a time and presently I see beautiful birds flitting to and fro. I cry out with rapture, and say, "Oh, I know now what the earth, rivers, lakes, foliage and all other things were created for. It was all done for the pretty birds." But again I say, why are the birds here? Of what use are they?

I wait patiently, and when I look about me again I see that the waters are full of movement; tiny fish are sporting in the brooks, and great whales are spouting from the ocean's depth. Huge beasts come out and graze on the rich herbage along the lofty hills. And now I think I know what was in God's mind when He first rolled together the great masses out of which the earth was formed.

I look upon the scene, and although it is very beautiful and grand, I cannot yet see the intent or purpose of it. Why has God done this? Not being fully satisfied, I wait patiently for something new to develop, and one morning across the mountains the "sun came wading through reddish vapors, and, soft and silver-white, outspread the broad ocean, without a ripple upon its surface, or visible motion of the ever-moving current, all was silent, and calm, and beautiful."

Amidst this lovely scene the Creator commences a work different from all other things heretofore created.

Finally the work is completed. The object seems perfect in every part, yet it seems to be the most useless thing in existence. Only a machine standing still — a dead organization — an apparatus. To put the object in a state of activity, to set it at

work, a further provision is necessary. After viewing the work for a moment, God breathed the breath of life into its nostrils and it (man) became a living soul.

Do you ask what this last object of creation is? I answer, it is man — God's own child. Yes, it is a human spirit. After looking about it for awhile in wonder and amazement, the new creature lifts its eyes toward Heaven and cries out with a loud voice, "Father! Father! Oh, my blessed Father!"

We have now found out what God's thought was. Aye, a thousand million years before the creation of the earth, man was in God's thought. But, says one, you have not yet given me to understand what man is. Bear with me patiently for a while longer and I will tell you.

"To-day in one of our homes a mother struggles, suffers untold agony, and a child is born. You look at the child and see nothing apparently but a mass of quivering flesh! If the child lives, it will grow. When two years of age it will weigh twenty pounds; when fifteen, seventy-five; and finally one hundred and fifty.

Go look at the babe when it is three weeks old; it is not the same creature it was when first you saw it.

It opens its eyes and looks up into your face, reminding you of an interrogation point more than anything else, for it seems to say, "Who are you, and what do you want?"

You go away, and return again in four months. Another change has taken place, and the babe you see now is not the one you saw before. It reaches

up and puts its tiny little hand lovingly on the mother's cheek, and smiles. Ah, an angel has come, and Love now fills every fiber of its soul. It grows, and now we see it in the capacity of a school-boy, loaded down with geographies, grammars, arithmetics, etc., working, battling, pushing and struggling for a place in life.

Again we behold him and he is a man; he does for himself, he thinks for himself and gets the food with which to feed him and his. Just at this point let us look for a moment at man's work and see what he has done for the world, toward beautifying it.

Man has created a world in a world. How barren and lonesome this world would be to us if all that man has done for it was suddenly swept away. In the bowels of the earth God hid the iron, copper, lead, silver and gold. Man has found all these substances and applied them to useful purposes in social life, thereby adding to and greatly enhancing the beauty of earth.

It is man's thought that has brought this about. But this thinker in man! What is it? I take a chisel in my hand and commence to carve the rough stone. I carve here and now I say to my hand, "Carve there!" Instantly the member does the bidding of my thinker.

I take up my pen to write, but it remains dumb in my hands. Presently my thinker tells it to write; instantly it writes. I tell it to cease; it ceases at once. Oh, how wonderful are the ways of God.

Ah, my dear reader, again I say this outward form *is not man.* It is simply a shell given for the

use of the man who lives within, where no eye except God's can penetrate. If you are making an idol of your body you are wasting precious time. Time far more precious than tongue can tell, for it must perish; it will return to dust; but the *true* man, the inner man, the man that is destined to live forever and forever. Oh, in the name of a crucified Savior, I plead with you to neglect Him not — neglect Him not.

But let us return again to the babe, now grown to man's estate. He lives until he reaches the ripe age of sixty years and then, all crooked and lame and halt and blind, he dies.

Oh! how very loathesome he becomes. His dearest friends hurry and make ready to put him in the ground, because he is repulsive to their sight. As he is lowered into the grave dear friends gather around and weep over his remains. But they are shedding tears over what is now an imaginary object; for the man, the invisible man, the inner man, the thinker, the soul, is now winging its way upward, and the tears of loved ones left behind do but fall on worthless clay.

As the mourners turn away from the grave I look again toward the immortal man as he wings his way through space, rejoicing because his immortal soul has been cut loose by the great scissors of death, from the earth, earthy. I continue to watch him and after the lapse of a thousand years I still see him going, going, higher and higher, until finally he is lost to view in the halo of beauty and glory which surrounds him in the midst of Heaven.

Eternity! Eternity! Aye, David, I shout it to

you. This, ah, this is what man is. Viewing man from this standpoint, "why add to the miseries of life by brooding over death? Is life to any of us such unmixed pleasure, even while it lasts? Why, then, call it wretched, even if we die before our natural time? Nature has lent us life, without fixing the day of payment, and uncertainty is one of the conditions of its tenure. Compare our longest life with eternity and it is as short-lived as that of those ephemeral insects whose life is measured by a summer day, and who, when the sun sets, have reached old age."

Let us, therefore, base our happiness on strength of mind, on contempt of earthly pleasures, and on the strict observance of virtue.

Finally, after saying all we can about man, the whole subject terminates in this one solid truth — *Man is an immortal being.*

The great Shakespeare makes his soliloquizing Hamlet say: "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" Novalis, getting bright glimpses of the soul, declares:

"Man is the higher sense of our planet, the star which connects it with the upper world, the eye which it turns toward Heaven." Bushnell, looking thoughtfully down into the soul, breaks forth in the words;

"O this great and mighty soul! were it something less, you might find what to do with it;

charm it with the jingle of a golden toy, house it in a safe with ledgers and stocks, take it about on journeys to see and be seen! Anything would please it and bring it content. But it is the God-like soul, capable of rest in nothing but God; able to be filled and satisfied with nothing but His fullness and the confidence of His friendship!"

Man is immortal, and immortality implies un ending personal existence. Nay, more, it implies unending personal identity. Nay, more, it implies the eternal onward rolling of a personal life-stream, to which every mental capability shall forever be a tributary, and wherein thoughts, feelings and volitions shall forever merge. Immortality! O what a wonderful depth of meaning there is in this belief!

"So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

THE SOUL, AND ITS VALUE.

A healthy body is good; but a soul in right health — it is the thing beyond all others to be prayed for; the blessedest thing this earth receives of Heaven.

—*Carlyle.*

Time is the life of the soul.

—*Longfellow.*

THE SOUL, AND ITS VALUE.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE is no topic more gravely important than that of the soul's value.

"For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul." These words were spoken by One who — although very rich — laid aside His robes of Diety and came to earth for the purpose of redeeming man's mortal crime.

He spoke to the people gathered about Him of profit. A word full of deep meaning, and one that has been in use since the foundation of the world. But to-day the word profit signifies more than ever before in the world's history. When a person of this day and age wishes to embark in business of any kind, his first question is, "Will it pay?"

The farmer — if he is enterprising — looks over his fields of wheat, corn and hay, then figures the amount of his profit.

The architect, before he bids on a building of any kind, first figures the cost and ascertains what his profit will be when the building is completed. In fact, men in every avocation of life seek a profit — a remuneration for their labor and skill.

Man also seeks to make himself safe. If he wishes

to purchase a farm he goes to the county records and ascertains whether or not there are any mortgages resting on it. If he finds that he cannot procure a clear title to the land he turns away and looks elsewhere.

A man goes to work and builds a magnificent residence. When it is completed in every particular, he looks upon it with pride, and his face lights up with a pleasant smile as he thinks how glorious it will be to spend the remaining years of his life in such a pleasant home. While sitting in his easy chair — some weeks after taking up his abode in the new dwelling — engaged in silent thought, a wonderful revelation suddenly dawns upon him.

He springs to his feet and walks the floor in an excited manner; all the contentment that was his but a moment ago has flown, and he finds that he has suddenly been transformed from a quiet, contented, easy-going man into a restless, uneasy, agitated creature, and why? Because all at once the fearful thought of fire and its dreadful ravages has occurred to him.

His beautiful house is unprotected; it is exposed to fire from below and to the thunderbolt from above. What does he do? He neither eats nor sleeps until he holds in his hand an insurance policy. Then his former contentment returns, for he knows f his house burns he will be able to rebuild.

Precaution in temporal things is right and proper, but the thought is a sad one when we think of the vast number of persons who are so careful of their earthly possessions and yet are so careless and

unconcerned about the only imperishable thing in the universe, *i. e.*, the soul.

Oh! blessed reader, if you have never taken out a policy on your soul, do so at once, for the value of such a policy is *incalculable*. And now let us for a moment look at the soul's nature. In this connection I will mention the opinions of some of the philosophers of antiquity, some of the profound inquirers of modern past centuries, and some of the exploring thinkers of the passing age.

Anaximander represented the soul as a compound of earth and water.

Crates asserted that it is only a natural stirring of the body. Zeno averred that it seemed to him to be fire.

The Chaldean philosophers affirmed it to be a vital habit of the human frame. Hippocrates claimed that it is a spirit diffused throughout the body. Socrates believed the soul to be that which moves the body, and is the man's self.

Saint Austin called it a self-moving spiritual substance. According to Spinoza, the soul is a modification of thought, and thought is one of the infinite attributes of Deity.

According to "orthodox" interpreters of Genesis, ii. 7, from Eusebius to Dean Patrick, the soul is an intelligent substance, which bears a resemblance to the divine substance. It has the body for its earthly covering, and is linked to the body by that powerful bond, the vital breath. We will now glance at opinions of the soul's nature which have been set forth recently.

Lewes says: "The soul is an entity which, before

it began its present life, had somewhere lived, somewhere exercised intelligent power, somewhere been conscious of experience."

Frederick Harrison: "The soul is a name for the combined faculties of the living human organism."

I have now given you the opinions of a great many learned men in regard to the soul's nature, and although there are no two opinions worded alike, yet we find that in substance and meaning they are all very near together. Every argument advanced finally ends in this one fixed fact: *The soul is the God part of man.*

"The measure of what we can know about the soul is, in all probability, very small in comparison with the measure of what we cannot know about it; certain it is, however, that just in proportion to the increase of our knowledge of the soul, in that proportion will our definition of it become more and more comprehensive."

Suffice it to say that God has planted in every human body a part of His own great self, which we will call a soul. Now, as adventurers for another world, it behooves us to be very careful how we handle the God-given soul within us. It is our business to reprint the image of God on the soul; and he who neglects to do so will have but one time in which to regret it; and that will be throughout eternity.

A few months ago I listened to a man as he recounted to me his wonderful possessions. Said he: "I have here in one body, all under fence, fifty thousand acres. Inside this pasture I have at present ten thousand head of cattle; and scattered

about over the balance of my land I have fifty thousand head of sheep and eight hundred head of Angora goats." As I looked at the man of wealth I thought what a poor, deluded wretch he was; claiming so much, when, in the true sense, nothing was his. Rich he was in this world, but what a pauper he will be in the world to come.

We know not what minute God will call us to account. To-day the rich man says; "I must tear down my barns and build greater;" but before the morrow's sun tinges the eastern horizon with mellow light, God demands of him his soul. When I see people gathering wealth about them, with no thought whatever of a hereafter, I am reminded of the poor fellow who went into the forest one cold, winter day for wood. He piled a great heap together, and then tried to lift it, but it was too heavy; he could not move it. Then he piled on more and more, until the pile grew to wonderful dimensions. Finally he became so cold and numb he could work no more. He then laid down beside the great heap and died.

What shall it profit us if we gain the whole world and lose our soul?

Let the history of such men as Cæsar and Napoleon answer the question.

Cæsar, the great and mighty, returned to Rome after the battle of Munda and enjoyed one year of magnificent splendor and regal power in Rome. Finally, however, he was struck to death by Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators, and fell at the foot of Pompey's statue.

"Then burst his mighty heart;
And in his mantle muffling up his face

Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell."

Napoleon cried out when the stygian darkness enveloped him; "Surely Christ must have been more than mortal, for His kingdom stands firm and immovable. I have built to no purpose; I fought for Napoleon; I built and tore down for Napoleon, and now, alas! alas! where is my profit? There is none for me."

Such are the cries that are continually rising to the throne from mortals that have neglected their souls. A few years ago a dreadful cyclone passed through the village of ——. After quiet was restored, a woman in a dying condition was picked up in the street. Kind hands carried her into a house, and loving words were spoken to her by pitying friends. But the suffering woman heeded them not; her one wild cry was: "O Lord have mercy!"

A minister was called, and to him she constantly pleaded: "O pray for my soul!" At short intervals she would cry out: "My Savior, O, my Savior, have mercy on my soul!" Thus she raved until midnight, when she died.

All the years of her life had been spent in sin. No thought of her soul ever entered her mind, until that dark hour came, and then she knew and fully comprehended how valuable her soul was.

Death is not a pleasant thing to think about; yet we are born to die, and it is our duty to meet death bravely as possible. Certain it is, if we have our souls in proper trim there is nothing to be afraid of.

Listen a moment. Hush! Hear you not that

rumbling noise? It is the thundering from the chariot wheels of time as they roll along the river of death, bearing into eternity souls that are this moment leaving us. Eternity, eternity! how vast thou art!

If all the oceans, lakes, seas, gulfs, rivers, springs, and rivulets in the world were converted into ink; and all the gold, silver, copper, brass, iron and every other mineral in existence was made into pens with which to write up the ink, when the last drop of ink was exhausted eternity would not yet have begun. Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!

Says one: "I do not believe this world will be destroyed by fire." Such persons argue that the earth being three-fourths water, such a thing as annihilation by fire would be impossible. How foolish such persons are. Water is composed of two gases, which, when separated, are quick to burn. How very easy it will be, then, for God to separate these gases, and in a moment's time wrap this beautiful world of ours in one vast fiery flame.

The divine power exhibited almost every day is enough to convince the most skeptical that the only real profit in life is the saving of the soul. In 1794 the volcano Vesuvius sent forth a fountain of bright fire, attended by black smoke and muttering thunder. In a short time sixteen fiery streams, extending downward for a mile and a half, were running from the blazing crater. The sound of the burning mountain was like the roaring of the ocean during a violent storm. In the eruption of Etna in 1669 the stream of boiling, seething fire destroyed in forty days 17,000 people. Such are some of the

striking instances of God's power, and I think they are indications of His displeasure against a race of transgressors who have apostatized from His laws.

In that season of the year, when nature is clad in her most beautiful attire, and the whole terrestrial landscape tends to inspire the mind with cheerfulness — suddenly a dark cloud emerges from the horizon—the sky assumes a baleful aspect—a dismal gloom envelops the face of nature—vivid lightnings flash from one end of the horizon to another—the awful muttering thunders roll with fearful grandeur and majesty along the verge of heaven, till at last they burst overhead in tremendous explosions. The giant oak is riven and despoiled of its bright foliage; huge rocks are rent into shivers and the grazing herds are struck into a lifeless group.

"Considering all these things, is it not reasonable to conclude that storms, volcanoes and earthquakes are so many occasional indications of the frown of an offended Creator upon a race of transgressors, in order to arouse them to a sense of their apostacy from the God of Heaven."

Let us therefore make peace before the storm cloud gathers; let us work hard to attain a more thorough knowledge of the soul and its value. As we go forth with our bodies adorned in purple and velvet, let us stop and consider what we are doing. If we are pampering our mortal bodies, which are fattening for the worms, and neglecting our souls, let us in the name of all that is holy cry a halt. Every person endowed with reason desires to go to heaven. Going to heaven is like starting in any

kind of business; a great deal depends on our first step.

Impress upon your mind the fact that God is the father of all, and has stamped His own divine image on every soul, and that the infinite and boundless love of the God-father goes out to all His children, that all alike are equal with Him, and that this life is but a preparatory life for the better one beyond — then you have the true starting point on the great highway which leads to Heaven.

There is in every human a longing that no earthly thing can satisfy. Go forth and commune with nature when she is in her happiest mood; ask her to quell the restlessness within. She answers back, "No hope, no hope." Then Echo softly repeats in mournful accents, "No hope, no hope." Oh! the soul. It is the abode of longings that cannot be silenced. The soul! it is the subject of endless stirrings. The soul! it must look to Christ for rest. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Many persons in our beautiful land assert that if the soul is so very valuable, surely God would never destroy it, or banish it to a land of darkness and gloom, no matter what its condition is. I pity any one who advances such a theory. God is, of course, a God of love. And certain it is that He loves every soul that lives, a fact that He fully proved when He gave His only Son to die on the cross.

The fact that God loves a soul is no reason why He must necessarily save it. God loved Adam and Eve with an endless, undying love — such a

love as only God Himself could have — and yet He drove them out of Eden. Why? Because they violated His sacred command. God loved Moses with a love as deep as Heaven; yet He did not allow him to enter the Promised Land. Why? Because he disobeyed Him.

Just so it is with us to-day. God loves us dearly; and He wants us to live with Him after while in His beautiful home; but I tell you, unless we are obedient, we cannot hope to enter His kingdom. God gave to man's soul the power of thought and reason. The soul can improve in the highest sense of improving. The soul can discover the existence of deity — it can pray and adore — aye, it, and it only, can look forward to a life of joy beyond the grave. In addition to these things, God has given the soul splendid laws for its government. He has also given it a beautiful world, filled with blooming flowers and singing birds, in which to live. Thus surrounded and endowed the soul looks forth on the busy scene of action and says: "God expects me to do a great work. He expects me to fit and prepare myself for Heaven." So much, so good. Now let us, for argument sake, follow this soul in its course. Years come and go, and the soul grows strong and active. From helpless infancy it passes to adult years, and finally comes to where the days of a maturer age are passing rapidly by. During all this time it has traced the law laid down for its government and all has gone well. Presently, in the very midst of perfect peace, it violates that part of the law which says: "Look not upon the wine when it is red." The soul sees what it has done at

once, and stands trembling as it thinks of a displeased and offended God. It rallies, however, and goes on its journey. Suddenly another law is broken; that one which says: "Touch not, taste not, handle not." From this time on the soul grows worse and worse. And now I see it going up a dark street, staggering as it goes. Finally it comes to a small house, stops a moment, then passes inside. In a dark, gloomy corner of the room lies another soul in the form of a woman. To judge from the emaciated form one would think this soul was in a fearful condition. Not so, however, for it is bright, joyful, and as pure as when God placed it in the miserable body that now holds it. The two souls look at each other for a long time before either speak. Then the soul on the pallet says: "In a little while, darling, I will be done with earth." Then the soul in the form of man answers: "If you leave earth, whither will you go?" "To Heaven," answers she. "Pray, how do you know you will go to Heaven?" "Because God has told me so." "Why does He say He will take you there?"

"One reason is because He loves me; the other, because I love Him." The dialogue between the two souls is here cut short, because death comes in and spirits them away. One soul mounts on high and cleaves its way through space toward Heaven. The other takes up its abode in everlasting darkness and torment. Why? Because it is blackened over with crime; stunted, warped, and filled with blasphemy. Now, admitting that God loved it, could He admit it into His realm without violating

the law of Heaven? I answer, no. Mercy is the highest justice. It regards not those laws of divine government which conserve the stability of the world; but those higher laws which belong to infinite power as well as infinite love. God's love is a law of His nature, to which He is strictly obedient. To the law of love everything in strict justice must yield. Pain and misery must be banished or mercy falls short of the accomplishment of its purpose."

As Jesus Christ is love, so will He banish them. But great as are the demands of mercy upon the heart of God, let us beware how we defy that mercy and that love. Pain may be banished from the new heavens and the new earth, but the soul that rejects the overtures of mercy, will find that pain again in hell.

We are the children of God's love, and just so long as we keep his commandments, not in the letter alone but in the spirit of love, we shall be considered fit dwellings for His glorious majesty to dwell in.

Turning from these thoughts, let us consider the value of a soul from another standpoint. The most ill-conditioned man in any nation of the world is, in spite of all that can be said to the contrary, a wonderfully significant, living being. Men greatly err when they conclude that a soul — even though it be in the lowest stage of development — is of little worth or of trivial account. The lowest, vilest, meanest, the most contemptible, abject, unscrupulous, infamous members of society have something inexpressibly valuable about them. The raving,

swearing, blaspheming drunkard has that within him which is worth more than gold or precious stones. "What is this something?" I answer, it is the soul. And that soul, in point of value, surpasses that of the fairest, brightest stars in heaven. Souls in such a condition seem to us to be unworthy of our consideration. Not so, however; for it is possible, and highly probable, that if the light of souls that are now basking in God's sunshine is brought to bear upon them, they will be lifted from their beggarly elements and placed on a firm footing with Christ. A few years ago an old tramp, tired and sick, sat down in front of a village church. His clothes hung in shreds on his trembling body, and his face bore the mark of deep suffering. Persons whom he had passed on his way had turned aside muttering, "O, what a vile, worthless creature he is." Within the little church Sunday-school was in session; and as the tired old man listened to the voices of innocent children, his mind traveled back over the years of his wasted life, to the time when he was a joyous, glad-hearted boy. Then, step by step, he traced his life of crime and sin to the present hour. Scalding tears coursed down his wrinkled cheeks, as the knowledge of what he was, and of what he might have been, dawned upon him.

In the neglected, famished province of his soul he felt the deep thrill of a new life.

Mind, heart and body were springing into action.

He felt meanness depart, and knew when majesty took its place. The beginning of his soul's salvation was at hand. For the first time in all his life, he

realized how valuable was his soul. The one thing needful, and that for which he had been in sore need of all his life, was his at last — namely, knowledge in the soul.

Ah, that which can produce a complete reformation on the part of one who has become so degraded as to be an object of contemptuous pity even to the vicious: that which can deliver the most unworthy man or woman on the whole earth, from the track of a shameful career, and from the liability to a dark and frightful end, is genial and salubrious knowledge, assimilated in regions of the soul, where previous capabilities have been lying torpid.

When the old tramp again pursued his way his step was firm; and on his face the soft, mellow light of peace shone resplendent.

"O, fellow-soul, whosoever thou art, look not down on thyself! Up and perceive what thou canst be!"

Have you ever yet come to ask yourself that question of mystery, What is my soul? If not, you will. Oh, mystery! What is this being which I call self? Is it my hand? No, cutit off and I, with power to think, to love, to hate, still am. Pluck out the eye, and I am still sitting behind the darkened window, thinking of the bright sunlight once seen. "Vital spark," "Heavenly flame," personality, disposition, character, mind or soul! These are verbal guesses at an unreachable reality. This is what must be changed, if I am to be changed. Will water touch it? No. Will knee-bendings, or confirmation robes of white, or hands of fellowship? No. Will new ideas? Man may adopt

the clearest ideas of right and wrong while yet a villain. Will outward morality touch this inner something? Not necessarily; for one may be a hypocrite. What will touch and change the spirit of a man?

Only the Spirit who first created can re-create a spirit which has, somewhere, lost its pristine spirituality. There is just one condition of absolute solitude in our lives; one possibility of being utterly alone. It is not on the mountain top, nor in the crowded street. It is not even when one thinks. It is the moment of decision; the supreme instant of the "*I will.*"

Say that you are willing to know the heights, depths, lengths and breadths of the Christian life, and the work of your soul's saving is as good as done.

Finally, I say, prepare thy soul to meet its God. Be ready and waiting when the Reaper comes; for He cometh unexpectedly. "Some night when you and I are sleeping calmly, shall the spirit host await the orders of the Reaper. This night may be the last, and ere the morning dawn He may descend with the glare of His glory and the blare of His trumpet, to fix our fate for ever. Those who sleep in Jesus will rise even as He rose. He rose, He burst the bars of death, and triumphed o'er the grave; then first humanity triumphant passed the crystal ports of light."

Kind reader, my task is now finished. I have not written for fame, glory, or renown; but have written in order that some soul might be raised from the barren field of waste and denial onto a

plane of truth, where, with the broad rays of God's love shining about it, it could see itself in its true light, and know and realize how very *valuable it was.*

The night is far advanced and a death-like silence reigns supreme. Ah, to-night, my soul is on fire; my whole being is electrified, and my brain throbs as though it were angry at my tardiness. Oh, God! I feel to-night more than ever before how small and insignificant the things of this life are, when compared with the soul and eternity.

The silence is grander and more impressive, and the moon, with its sweet, wan face, looks in upon me, and whispers to me of bright realms far away. Ah, my brain! do thy work; grasp the many sublime thoughts that are now coursing through thy countless chambers! Oh, lamp of my soul! burn clear and bright, so I can see more of the mercies of God; help me to look through the darkness that shuts the throne of God from my vision!

Hush — hark! I hear sweet voices from out the realm of night, sounding like an angel's whisper in a dream, so soft, so low, so sweet, I can scarcely hear. Nearer and nearer the voices come, and now a voice speaks out clear and distinct, and says: "The soul! O, how valuable it is! What wonderful possibilities are within its reach! The soul, if it so wills, can live in Heaven with Christ throughout all eternity!" For a moment all is quiet; then the faint voices of the angel band, winging their way toward the twinkling stars, murmur in accents low: "Good-night! Good-night!"

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